



THE MIDDLE

by Chris Chapman

THE DOCTOR: COLIN BAKER

Mysterious Time Lord.

CONSTANCE CLARKE: MIRANDA RAISON

Cool, genteel Wren, formerly of Bletchley Park.

FLIP: LISA GREENWOOD

Philippa Jackson – impulsive, sarky young East Londoner.

THE MIDDLEMAN:

(M, 40s) Passive-aggressive middle management with a homicidal streak.

JANAIYA:

(F, 60+) Sensitive, mercurial, capable of great strength.

ROMAN:

(M, 60+) Bruiser with a big heart.

CALLUM YORK:

(M, 50s) Company man, only just holding it together.

OLIVIA YORK:

(20s) Like something out of TOWIE... or is she?

CHLOE:

(20s) Young Mum out on the town.

OTHER ROLES:

VIOLET: (double with CHLOE)

(20s) Cut-glass business woman.

COMPUTER: (double with CHLOE)

Rather cheerful, all things considered.

MARKET SELLER: (double with CALLUM YORK?)
(30s, working class) Likes to be heard.

JAVONTE: (double with CALLUM YORK?)
(M, 60+) Victim, upper class, was sort of hoping this wouldn't happen to him.

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PART ONE

MUSIC: OPENING THEME

SCENE 1: INT. THE BIRTHDAY ROOM

FX: A WOMAN BREATHING, LONG DEEP INTAKES. LOW HUM OF ELECTRONIC APPARATUS - INCLUDING REGULAR 'BLIP' OF A HEART MONITOR:

JANAIYA

(SOFT-SPOKEN, TEARY AT TIMES) I'm not sure if you remember this - you were only small - but I used to have you up on my shoulders sometimes, and we'd go along the side of the canal. You'd be too big for it now, little pickle, but back then you'd point at everything and want to know what it was - and I could tell you what *almost* everything was. But sometimes you'd point at a bird or a tree, and you'd want to know what type of a bird or a tree it was - and I wouldn't know the answer. So I'd make it up! My love, I'm afraid there's no such thing as a Saw-End Duck or a Great Marmaduke Tree. I hope you're not too disappointed, but I rather enjoyed inventing them. And you did smile.

BEAT - FILLED BY FX: HEART MONITOR.

JANAIYA

I don't want any of you to worry. I know you will, but you shouldn't. I'm going to be alright - I'll be with your father soon. I've missed him a lot, you know. Maybe I'm looking forward to this, in a funny sort of way. But I'm going to miss you all dearly.

FX: SOMETHING ELECTRONIC POWERING UP...

JANAIYA

I can feel it coming now. Chloe, tell Sophie I love her - I know she'll be too young to understand, but do tell her.

COMPUTER

Ten, nine, eight, seven -

JANAIYA

(PANICKED) Oh no, please, can I have a little more time?

COMPUTER

Six, five, four -

JANAIYA

(HURRIED) I love you, my darlings, I love you so much.

COMPUTER

Three, two, one.

JANAIYA

(DEEP BREATH) Goodbye.

COMPUTER

Zero. Happy birthday, and welcome to the End.

FX: HUGE ZAAAAP! HEART MONITOR FLATLINES.

SCENE 2: INT. TARDIS – CONTROL ROOM

FX: LANDING CHIME. DOCTOR CHECKS VARIOUS CONTROLS AS INTERIOR DOOR OPENS AND FLIP FOLLOWS CONSTANCE IN.

FLIP

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Connie, happy -

CONSTANCE

Yes, that's quite enough of that, thank you.

FLIP

I can't believe you weren't going to tell me. That's well sneaky, that is.

CONSTANCE

I prefer not to make a fuss about it, and I don't expect today to be any different.

FLIP

So come on, Con - how old are you, exactly?

DOCTOR

(AT CONTROLS) Mrs Ramon! A lady should not be required to disclose her age.

CONSTANCE

I see we've landed. I think some fresh air may be in order?

DOCTOR

I don't think it'll be quite fresh, Mrs Clarke. I'm detecting a heavily recycled atmosphere. But it appears they've added a little bit of flavouring - rather like lemon sherbert - so it should be quite tolerable.

CONSTANCE

Let's head out, then. Please.

FX: TARDIS DOORS OPEN. AS THEY EXIT:

FLIP

For she's a jolly good fellow, for she's a jolly good fellow, for she's a jolly good fe-e-llow -

SCENE 3: EXT. ROOFTOP [CONTINUOUS]

FX: THEY WALK OUT. A WIND BLOWS; SENSE OF BEING UP A HEIGHT.

DOCTOR

Now that is quite a view. "Jocund day stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops" – as a predecessor of mine once said.

CONSTANCE

Your predecessor was Shakespeare?

DOCTOR

Well, no, but he did think rather highly of himself.

FX: DOCTOR CLOSES TARDIS DOOR. TECHNOLOGY – TRANSPORTS DRIVING BY, DRONES FLYING BY.

FLIP

Oooo – flying stuff!

DOCTOR

What do you think? Busy city, technologically quite advanced... I'd say an Earth colony, judging by the architecture.

CONSTANCE

Doctor. You can't possibly know that at a glance.

FLIP

I dunno – he is a bit of an Earth Spotter, isn't he, our Doctor? With his pocket guide to human stuff and his little pencil to circle what he sees.

DOCTOR

Yes, thank you, Flip. I like to call it using my eyes. And I also spy what looks like the limestone roof of a cavern up through the clouds.

FLIP

Roof?!

DOCTOR

Somewhere subterranean, with its own eco-system. Impressive.

CONSTANCE

Like the inside of a stone snowglobe. I'm suddenly feeling slightly claustrophobic.

FLIP

Why, does it come on with old age?

CONSTANCE

(NOT TOO ANNOYED) Oh, for goodness' sake...

FLIP

Come on, no secrets, not between us. I'm nineteen, he's nine-hundred-and-whatever-he-says-today, and you are...?

CONSTANCE

(SIGH) Thirty-five. I am thirty-five.

FLIP

Aha!

CONSTANCE

Now, can we leave it at that?

FLIP

Doctor, this had better be Planet Ibiza, or something - cus I've got a Wren Party to organise!

FX: FAR BELOW - CARNIVAL PROCESSION PASSING. SPACE-Y INSTRUMENTS.

CONSTANCE

I do hope we can find something better to do. Even a spot of deadly peril would be fine.

DOCTOR

Well, I'm sure some deadly peril will be along in due course, Mrs Clarke. But you may be in luck, Flip - it looks like they're having some kind of carnival down below..

FLIP

(PEERS) That should do the trick.

DOCTOR

I must say, I'm far more curious about that glass structure beyond the square..

CONSTANCE

Quite magnificent, isn't it?

FLIP

(WORLD OF HER OWN) I could get masks made. - Cardboard masks with your face on, Connie.

CONSTANCE

Why on Earth would you want to do that?

DOCTOR

If my calculations are correct, that glass spire stands at the dead centre of the city - a column protruding from street level right the way to the roof of the cavern.

CONSTANCE

The whole thing's revolving – it's beautiful, the way it catches the light. Speaking of which – if we're underground, why is it daylight?

DOCTOR

Heavy duty floodlights, I'd say. We're in the middle of a technological marvel.

FLIP

In that case, there's got to be somewhere round here I can get some T-shirts made. Who fancies a trot down a fire escape? (AS SHE DISAPPEARS OFF) WREN PARTY!

CONSTANCE

I really don't want all this fuss.

DOCTOR

I'm not sure you've much choice in the matter. Come along, Mrs Clarke.

FX: THEY FOLLOW FLIP.

SCENE 4: INT. MIDDLE OFFICE

FX: YORK APPROACHES HIS DESK.

COMPUTER

Happy birthday!

FX: SMALL ELECTRONIC BIRTHDAY JINGLE — CONTINUING. [NB: DO **NOT** USE 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU' — IN COPYRIGHT.]

YORK

Oh good grief...

COMPUTER

Welcome to your desktop. Congratulations on reaching your sixty-first year, Mr York.

YORK

(HUSHED) Look, I'd rather not make a fuss. I don't want the rest of the office finding out if I can help it.

COMPUTER

I understand, sir. My sincere apologies on this happy day.

FX: BIRTHDAY JINGLE STOPS ABRUPTLY.

YORK

(SITTING DOWN) Computer, what... is... this?

COMPUTER

It is a cake. Your colleagues Gresh, Kayden and Wayne left it here for you.

YORK

Who told them? Is this some kind of joke?

FX: MIDDLEMAN WALKS UP THROUGH —

COMPUTER

No, it is a cake. Ingredients: eggs, flour, sugar, butter, baking powder, cocoa powder. Calorie breakdown: thirty-nine per cent fats, fifty-seven per cent carbohydrates, four per cent [protein.]

YORK

Well, it's going in the bin.

FX: HE PICKS UP THE CAKE, BUT IS INTERRUPTED.

MIDDLEMAN

Many happy returns, Callum. One step closer to the End, eh?

YORK

Sorry, Middleman, I didn't realise you were [there -]

MIDDLEMAN

And what a delightful cake.

YORK

A gift from my generous colleagues, sir.

MIDDLEMAN

How thoughtful. Your age today?

YORK

Sixty, sir.

MIDDLEMAN

I see. Ten more years. How does that feel? I must say, I'm not looking forward to it myself – too much to do first.

YORK

I am excited at the prospect. The great unknown.

MIDDLEMAN

Your departure will benefit your world. You've done such good service already. How marvellous to know you still have the ultimate contribution ahead.

YORK

Do you mind me asking, sir..

MIDDLEMAN

What?

YORK

Well, I don't think you've ever said. What is *your* age, sir?

MIDDLEMAN

That's classified, I'm afraid.

YORK

Oh, of course. I'm sorry, sir.

MIDDLEMAN

But do enjoy your cake.

YORK

Thank you, sir.

SCENE 5: **EXT. MARKETPLACE**

FX: ALIEN-Y MUSIC AS BEFORE. LAUGHING, CHEERING CROWDS. A CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE. CONTINUES THROUGH ENTIRE SCENE.

NB: ALL B/G VOICES AUDIBLY UNDER 35. VERY IMPORTANT.

MARKET SELLER:

(OFF; U-35) Fried tailgrot - who wants some tailgrot?!

YOUTHFUL REVELLERS: [WILDTRACK]

(CHEERING - AS IN CHILLI-EATING CONTEST) Five, four, three, two, one...! - Aaaaaah!!

FLIP

Doctor! This is perfect.

CONSTANCE

That's one way of putting it. I've never seen so much public debauchery.

DOCTOR

Just you wait for V.E. Day.

CONSTANCE

I'm sorry?

MARKET SELLER

Fried tailgrot, Miss?

CONSTANCE

It looks revolting.

MARKET SELLER

Lovely with a bit of pink sauce, that!

DOCTOR

I rather like it down here. Everything's so vibrant.

CONSTANCE

You would think that.

FLIP

(TO MARKET SELLER) Go on, I'll try some - what was it? Tailgrot? Got no cash, mind.

MARKET SELLER

You're alright, I like your smile. (FX: SPLOP IN CARDBOARD BOX) Here you go.

FLIP

Aw, thanks. (MOUTHFUL) Actually... that's not bad! Tastes of grapefruit. Meaty grapefruit!

MARKET SELLER

Best grub in Formicia.

CONSTANCE

Formicia? Is that where we are?

MARKET SELLER

Eh?

FLIP

Don't mind her – she's got birthday brain. Right, you two stay here – I'm gonna go find us a party.

CONSTANCE

Philippa!

FLIP

(EXITING) You'll love it, Connie!

CONSTANCE

Oh my...

DOCTOR

She means well.

CONSTANCE

I know. She's got so much energy – she makes me feel..

DOCTOR

Yes, quite.

CONSTANCE

Do you not 'do' birthdays, Doctor?

DOCTOR

I lost track of all that a long time ago.

CONSTANCE

I'm sure the TARDIS could keep track for you. If you wanted. With some kind of alarm, perhaps?

DOCTOR

As you know, Mrs Clarke – I am not a Time Lord to be scheduled.

CONSTANCE

Indeed. (BEAT) That billboard, Doctor – what do you make of it?

DOCTOR

'The End is the Beginning'? – Well, it's an advertising slogan, I suppose. Advertising what, I couldn't say.

CONSTANCE

It reminds me of the War Office posters – a call to arms.

FX: FLIP ARRIVES BACK – WITH A NEW FRIEND IN TOW...

FLIP

Doctor, Constance, I want you to meet Chloe – it was Chloe, yeah?

CHLOE

Yeah! – Nice to meet you! Whose birthday is it, then?

CONSTANCE

That would be me.

FLIP

Chloe's got some spare tickets to an all-nighter in the West Square – come on, do we fancy it? Wren party! Wren party!

CONSTANCE

I'm not sure –

CHLOE

(EYEING UP THE DOCTOR) Hang about. You didn't mention him.

FLIP

What?

CHLOE

I'm sorry. She can come, but not him.

DOCTOR

I beg your pardon?

CHLOE

You'll have to leave him here.

CONSTANCE

I'm afraid we can't –

CHLOE

Come on. They'll catch up with him, you know. Sooner or later.

FLIP

Eh? It's just the Doctor!

CHLOE

Look, he's not my problem. I'll be here at nine if you still want to come. And as for you...

DOCTOR

Yes?

CHLOE

You should be ashamed of yourself.

FX: CHLOE LEAVES.

DOCTOR

Was it something I said?

FLIP

Well. Some new B.F.F. she turned out to be. Sorry about that.

CONSTANCE

What exactly were you supposed to be ashamed of?

DOCTOR

The list is potentially endless. – She seemed very serious though, didn't she?

FLIP

Maybe curly hair is illegal here? Or Time Lords – maybe they hate Time Lords! Anyway, we've still got to find you a party, Connie.

CONSTANCE

Look, Flip, I really appreciate you wanting to do this for me – I do. But can't we do something a little quieter? On a smaller scale?

FLIP

Got it: spa!

CONSTANCE

Spa?

FLIP

Do it for my Mum every year. She goes loopy for a spa day. How would you feel, Connie, about a proper birthday pamper?

CONSTANCE

I'm not sure. The last time we visited a spa...

FLIP

That was back in seventeen hundred and something! On the other side of the square, I saw this place that looked like a health spot – massages, facials, that kind of thing. Only with robots.

CONSTANCE

(UNIMPRESSED) I suppose it had to be with robots.

DOCTOR

Well, you ladies will just have to carry on in my absence.

FLIP

Come on, Doctor. Do you the world of good. Take the weight of the universe off your shoulders.

DOCTOR

Flip, I've lived for nearly a millennium, fought innumerable intergalactic tyrants, liberated countless worlds and civilisations – and I've never once felt the slightest inclination to receive a robot massage.

FLIP

Well, maybe that's why you're so wound up all the time.

DOCTOR

All that lying around – far too close to sleeping for my liking.

CONSTANCE

Then again, I suppose it sounds rather more civilised than a... Wren Party?

FLIP

That's right!

DOCTOR

Is it?

CONSTANCE

Oh, do let's go, Doctor. I have to confess, I'm coming round to the idea.

DOCTOR

As it's your birthday, Mrs Clarke.

FLIP

Alright! But we're still calling it a Wren Party.

FX: AS THEY SET OFF –

DOCTOR

I've a feeling I'm going to regret this...

SCENE 6: INT. MIDDLE OFFICE

FX: YORK OPERATING ELECTRONICS AT HIS DESK.

YORK

Computer – camera three-four-two, please.

COMPUTER

Three-four-two full screen.

YORK

Hold on. Please check colour balance.

COMPUTER

Colour balance correct.

YORK

That coat actually looks like that?!

COMPUTER

Registering seventy-six individual colour tones.

YORK

Staggering exhibitionism. I take it these are our unregistered civilians?

COMPUTER

Correct. Ages not logged for all three individuals.

YORK

Alright, dispatch a scan drone.

COMPUTER

Dispatching.

FX: REPEATING BEEP.

COMPUTER

Mr York. We have a new arrival in the Birthday Room.

YORK

Thank you. Please patch it through to the Middleman's office – he was keen to congratulate anyone reaching the End this afternoon.

COMPUTER

Connecting now.

YORK

I think it's perverse. A computer could do it. I think he enjoys it..

SCENE 7: INT. THE BIRTHDAY ROOM

FX: HEART MONITOR AGAIN. MIDDLEMAN'S VOICE OVER SPEAKERS.

JAVONTE

Where am I?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Happy birthday, Javonte.

JAVONTE

It's finally happening, then.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) You are close to the End. I'm so proud to be able to usher you through... personally.

JAVONTE

Please, please, I'm not ready. You can't make me go.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) It's time to record your last message, Javonte. Choose your words with care – for the sake of your family. Ready?

FX: BEEP TONE.

JAVONTE

I have no choice in this, so... Gaynor, please don't be too unhappy, we'll be back together soon. I still remember the day we met. You were sat across from me on the transport – arms crossed, staring out of the window, and I leaned over and said hello... and you didn't tell me to get lost. I... Please, do we have to do this? I don't want this. I don't.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Your departure will benefit your world.

JAVONTE

You can't just decide what's best for me!

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Computer – time remaining?

COMPUTER

Twelve seconds until the End.

MIDDLEMAN

Please take over. This creature isn't worth my time. (TO JAVONTE) So many souls that pass this way do so with the courage you apparently lack.

COMPUTER

Eight, seven, six...

JAVONTE

I'm sorry, I didn't mean what I said..

COMPUTER

... five, four, three...

JAVONTE

I'm sorry!

COMPUTER

... two, one, zero. Happy birthday, and welcome to the End.

FX: AS BEFORE — HUGE ZAAP. HEART MONITOR FLATLINES.

SCENE 8: INT. SPA

FX: THUDDING OF ROBOT HANDS ON DOCTOR'S BACK — GENTLY MIRRORING PREVIOUS BEAT OF HEART MONITOR.

COMPUTER

Proceeding from lower back to shoulders. Are you going anywhere nice on holiday this year, sir?

DOCTOR

(VOICE WOBBLING AS MASSAGE CONTINUES) Flip?

FLIP

Yes, Doctor?

DOCTOR

This is doing very little for my tension!

CONSTANCE

Well, I'm beginning to feel... surprisingly relaxed. (REACTS IN A MINOR WAY TO BEING MASSAGED THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE SCENE)

DOCTOR

The whole experience is giving me robophobia. (GETTING OFF MASSAGE BENCH) I'm sorry, no!

FLIP

Doctor, don't you dare run off!

COMPUTER

Is something the matter, sir?

DOCTOR

I had a better time stretched out on the rack in the Tower of London. Mrs Clarke, Mrs Ramon, please excuse me. I shall see you later. (EXITS)

FLIP

Stop massage. (GETS UP, CALLING AFTER) Doctor, come back! Doctor! — Doctor, you're useless...

FX: A GIRL ON THE NEXT BED CHIMES IN.

OLIVIA

What's your mate's problem? Apart from the obvious.

COMPUTER

Proceeding to full pedicure.

OLIVIA

Thank you, computer.

FLIP

Don't mind him. – What are you having done?

OLIVIA

Oh, everything – it's not worth doing if you don't have the whole lot. They've got a special on diamond-tipped eyelashes now – did you hear?

FLIP

That sounds... nice?

OLIVIA

Might try that today. Have you been before?

FLIP

First time.

OLIVIA

I pretty much live here. Spa all day, party all night – that's the life.

FLIP

That sounds amazing. I'm Flip by the way – nice to get a robo-massage beside you.

OLIVIA

Olivia. Likewise.

FLIP

So you just do this all day? You don't have to work?

OLIVIA

Why would I? I'm only twenty-six.

FLIP

Well jel. Young people don't have to work? I could get to like it here.

OLIVIA

What do you mean 'here'?

FLIP

Nothing.

OLIVIA

Working's what parents are for. My Dad's been head down in the Middle for years to let me do what I want out here, bless him.

FLIP

The Middle?

OLIVIA

Yeah, course. (CONFIDENTIALLY) Look, do you mind me asking...?

FLIP

(CONFIDENTIALLY BACK) What?

OLIVIA

Your two friends... how old are they?

FLIP

Ha! You can't ask that – Mrs Clarke here's a lady! (WHISPERS) A lady who's turning thirty-five...

OLIVIA

Ah, so that's why you're here? A goodbye party?

FLIP

Goodbye to what?

OLIVIA

Well, her freedom.

FLIP

What?

OLIVIA

And your older gent – you know, he really shouldn't be out in public. He's so obvious.

FLIP

I've been saying that for ages – but look, what do you mean by –

OLIVIA

They'll arrest him, you know.

FLIP

You know, you're the second person to... why would they want arrest him?

OLIVIA

Well. As a coward.

FLIP

The Doctor's lots of things, but he's definitely not a coward.

OLIVIA

He's here, isn't he? So he's shirking his duties.

FLIP

Yeah – he's shirking with me. He's my friend.

OLIVIA

I shouldn't even be talking to you. - In fact, I really shouldn't. Pedicure off, please.

COMPUTER

Pedicure halted.

FX: AS OLIVIA GETS UP -

FLIP

Hey, wait -

OLIVIA

See you around, OK? Just not with your friends. (EXITS)

SCENE 9: INT. MIDDLE OFFICE

YORK

Computer, I'd like to send my birthday message now.

COMPUTER

Now recording sixtieth birthday message. You have ten remaining until the End.

YORK

Computer, deactivate yourself – I'd like to say this in private.

FX: POWERING DOWN SOUND.

YORK

Hey. It's me. Hope I don't look too different. A bit more grey, a few more lines, but still your old Dad. Sixty today – didn't want to make a fuss, obviously. I saw you on the cameras yesterday – on West Square, I think. I always wonder if you'll somehow know I'm watching and give me a wave. It's not happened yet. That's the problem with these annual messages – so hard to have an actual chat. Anyway, I'm still looking forward to your next one. Ten more to go for me. I used to think I'd be excited about it – happy to make the ultimate sacrifice. But the closer I get, the more it scares me. And I think the outlook is worse these days. There's a lot of chatter here... that something big is coming. All to do with the End. So just... be careful, OK? Be really careful. And... I love you.

FX: PRESSES 'SEND' BUTTON.

YORK

Computer – reactivate.

COMPUTER

Good evening, Mr York.

YORK

Look... can I record that again? I wasn't happy with that.

COMPUTER

Your birthday message has now been sent. Next communication available in one year.

YORK

Many happy returns...

SCENE 10: **EXT. SPA**

FX: OUR TRIO ARE WALKING AWAY.

CONSTANCE

Doctor, I really don't know why you had to kick up such a fuss.

DOCTOR

My dear Constance, when one has been strangled by as many androids as I have, you'd rather not pay for the privilege.

FLIP

Doctor, that girl I was next to – she was saying you were illegal too.

DOCTOR

Well, you can tell her that I have been tried for my crimes on more than one occasion – and I've always been acquitted.

FLIP

(SENSING SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT) 'Older gent'. That's what she called you. An 'older gent' ...

CONSTANCE

(REALISATION) Goodness gracious.

FLIP

Yeah – that's it, isn't it?!

DOCTOR

(BAFFLED) What's what?

FLIP

We've met, like, I don't know how many people now? And they've all been young.

CONSTANCE

Everyone in the square. Everyone in the spa.

FLIP

Ever since we landed, we've seen no-one old. No-one middle-aged, even!

DOCTOR

(LOOKING AROUND) Really? Well... (BIT DESPERATE) Maybe all this is part of a university campus, perhaps??

FLIP

You don't think that. Doctor, I think there's something weird going on round here.

FX: BUZZING OVERHEAD.

CONSTANCE

What's that?

FX: BUZZING FLIES DOWN CLOSER.

DOCTOR

Some kind of drone...

FLIP

Jared's mate got one of those – flew it near Heathrow and they shot it down. Hello, little cutie!

DRONE

Unregistered citizens... scanning, scanning.

FX: THE DRONE IS NOW BUZZING AROUND THEM, CLOSE.

FLIP

Oi, watch it!

DOCTOR

I daresay this is rather more sophisticated than anything one of Jared's mates might be able to acquire. It reminds me of an oculoid tracker...

DRONE

Age scan activate.

FLIP

Doctor, what's it doing? What's that red light?

FX: ELECTRONIC SCAN.

DOCTOR

Just let it scan you, Flip. Maybe it'll help give us some answers about this odd place.

CONSTANCE

Is it safe?

DOCTOR

Scans tend to be – even red ones – how do you feel?

FLIP

Fine, I think – just a bit blinded.

DRONE

Subject age... nineteen. Registered Beginning.

FLIP

Cheeky, ain't he?

FX: DRONE BUZZES OVER TO CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE

I think it's my turn.

FX: SCAN SOUND AGAIN.

DRONE

Subject age... thirty-four. Sixteen minutes remaining till Middle.

FLIP

Oh, right – so technically it's not your birthday yet?

CONSTANCE

Evidently not. Although quite how it knows that is beyond me.

FX: DRONE BUZZES TO DOCTOR.

DOCTOR

Ah, now I may be something of a surprise to you...

DRONE

Scanning, scanning...

FX: ELECTRONIC SOUND SEEMS TO GO WRONG (SYSTEM CAN'T CALCULATE THE DOCTOR'S AGE).

DRONE

Subject age... subject age... ninety-eight, ninety-eight, one hundred and seventy-six, three hundred and twenty-one, four hundred and fifty-seven, six hundred and forty-six – six – six – zzzix, zzzixxx... systems overloading. Systems overloading.

DOCTOR

Serves you right for being such a nosey parker!

DRONE

Subject too old for system calibrations.

DOCTOR

Well, of all the cheek!

DRONE

ZZZZ... zzz... Correction. Subject designated over seventy. Proceed to the End.

DOCTOR

Now, what do you mean by –

DRONE

End.

FX: DIFFERENT TYPE OF SOUND — A TRANSMAT POWERING UP.

CONSTANCE

Doctor, what's it doing? It's shaking!

DOCTOR

Oh dear. Flip, Constance, whatever you do —

FX: RISING SOUND BECOMES A ZASH! ... AND THE DOCTOR IS GONE.

CONSTANCE

He's gone!

FLIP

(TO DRONE) OI! What did you just do to our friend?

DRONE

Subject has been transported to the End.

FLIP

You bring him back right now!

DRONE

Registration complete.

FX: FLIES OFF.

FLIP

Come back! Where's Heathrow security when you need them?

CONSTANCE

Sixteen minutes.

FLIP

What?

CONSTANCE

It said 'sixteen minutes' when it scanned me. 'Sixteen minutes until Middle'.

FLIP

A countdown?

CONSTANCE

A countdown to what?

FLIP

Whatever it is, it's sixteen minutes from now. Or from then. Probably fifteen minutes now.

CONSTANCE

Until what? Oh, Flip, this is just typical – I didn't even want a birthday fuss!

FLIP

Well, it wasn't me who brought us to the planet of the Age Police!

CONSTANCE

The Middle. What's the Middle?

FLIP

Olivia...

CONSTANCE

What?

FLIP

That girl in the spa – Olivia – she said her Dad works at the Middle.

CONSTANCE

Well... we need to go and find her then – quickly!

SCENE 11: INT. THE BIRTHDAY ROOM

FX: TRANSMAT MATERIALISATION — REVERSE FX IN PREVIOUS SCENE?

DOCTOR

Gngh... transmats always make my spine rattle. And — (FINDS HIMSELF RESTRAINED) — you know, it's not nice to be teleported into restraints! Not nice at all. Hello! — Is anyone listening?

FX: LIFE SUPPORT MONITOR — TWO HEARTBEATS, OF COURSE.

COMPUTER

Query: double heartbeat detected. Recalibrating.

FX: QUIET HUMS, BRRS, BEEPS AND COMPUTER RESETS ITSELF.

DOCTOR

Computer? Computer, this is not on! I demand you return me to my friends at once!

SCENE 12: **EXT. MARKETPLACE**

FX: CONSTANCE AND FLIP RUNNING THROUGH MARKET. BUSY B/G FX AS BEFORE.

CONSTANCE

How long do we have – I mean, how long do I have?

FLIP

Six minutes or so, I think. That's a guess!

CONSTANCE

I'm close to the Middle. But the Doctor – that machine said he was at 'the End'...

FLIP

Doesn't sound too rosy, does it?

CONSTANCE

It does not. Is that why there are no older people here? Is there some sort of cull? Goodness, it's too horrible to think about.

FLIP

Hey, I'm sure the Doctor will have a trick up his sleeve.

CONSTANCE

I certainly hope so.

FLIP

Ah, I see her – Olivia – she's over there, just leaving the spa! (CALLING) Olivia! Liv!

FX: THEY CATCH HER UP.

OLIVIA

Oh, hello. What happened to your illegal friend?

CONSTANCE

Olivia, you have to help us. The Doctor was scanned by some kind of robot –

FLIP

A drone!

CONSTANCE

A drone. It said I was sixteen minutes from the Middle – what does that mean?

OLIVIA

Oh, come on – don't ask silly questions. What is it with you lot?

FLIP

Look, we're really thick, ok? Unbelievably stupid. Please, just tell us!

OLIVIA

Well – that's the Middle, over there.

CONSTANCE

The glass tower?

OLIVIA

That's the centre of government. That's where you're going.

CONSTANCE

I am?

OLIVIA

You're turning thirty-five, so I'm afraid the fun times are over. They'll put you to work – doing all the jobs that keep Formicia going. Boring but... that's life.

CONSTANCE

I'd hate to be considered a shirker, but I can't say it appeals.

OLIVIA

You've got no choice.

FLIP

Look, our friend – it scanned him and it said he was very old. Then it said something about 'the End' and it, you know, vanished him.

OLIVIA

The End? I didn't think he looked *that* old. You must give me the number of his plastic surgeon.

CONSTANCE

But what does it mean – the End?

OLIVIA

Well, it's the End. You won't see him again.

FX: BUZZING ABOVE.

FLIP

Connie – that drone...

CONSTANCE

It's come back for me.

FLIP

OK, we should run.

CONSTANCE

No, Flip. You heard what Olivia said. I've got no choice. Maybe I can get some answers in the Middle, find out what's happened to the Doctor – before it's too late.

DRONE

Scanning... scanning..

FLIP

Are you sure?

CONSTANCE

No.

DRONE

Subject age... thirty-five. Process to the Middle.

FX: TRANSMAT BEAM, AS BEFORE.

CONSTANCE

(FADING AWAY) All this fuss over a silly little birthday..

FX: TRANSMAT FINISHES. DRONE BUZZES OFF.

FLIP

She's gone. What am I supposed to do now?

OLIVIA

(HER VOICE SOUNDING MORE MATURE – LESS OF A POSE) You really don't know any of this, do you?

FLIP

Look, me and my friends – we're not from around here. As if you hadn't guessed.

OLIVIA

But that's not possible – this is all there is. There's nothing beyond Formicia.

FLIP

You sure about that, Olivia?

SCENE 13: **INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE**

FX: MIDDLEMAN IS WORKING AT HIS DESK.

COMPUTER

Sir, pre-programmed target located.

MIDDLEMAN

You've found her? Show me.

FX: SCREEN ACTIVATES. DUB OVER, FROM PREVIOUS SCENE:

OLIVIA

You really don't know any of this, do you?

MIDDLEMAN

Yes, that's her. She thought she could hide... but a little detective work was all it needed.

COMPUTER

Subject lock – procedure?

MIDDLEMAN

Cloaked – we need to keep this under wraps.

COMPUTER

Activating.

MIDDLEMAN

Goodbye, Miss Olivia.

SCENE 14: **EXT. MARKETPLACE**

OLIVIA

Look, if you're telling the truth, there's something I should –

FX: HUGE CRASH BEHIND THEM – A MARKET STALL IS THROWN OVER,
SPILLING APPLES ACROSS THE SQUARE. THERE ARE SCREAMS.

MARKET TRADERS: [WILDTRACK]
(CRIES OF ALARM)

FLIP

Erm. That stall just exploded. Was that supposed to happen?

FX: STOMPING FOOTSTEPS TOWARDS THEM. A BIG, HEAVY CREATURE...

OLIVIA

We're in danger.

FLIP

What is that? I don't see anything, but –

FX: MARKET STALL IS FLIPPED.

MARKET SELLER

Hey, my shop! Who did that?

OLIVIA

(TO FLIP) I'm sorry – this is my fault. They want me dead.

FLIP

Who does?

FX: HEAVY BREATHING ONCOMING – LIKE A HUGE BEAST.

OLIVIA

I thought I was hidden – like this assassin they've sent.
Evidently his disguise is better than mine.

FLIP

There's something there – like a huge animal. I can't see it.
But I can hear it.

OLIVIA

Run!!!

FX: INVISIBLE BEAST ROARS AND CHARGES TOWARDS THEM.

SCENE 15: **INT. BIRTHDAY ROOM**

FX: DOUBLE HEARTBEAT CONTINUES.

COMPUTER

Recalibration complete. Echo in monitoring system confirmed.

DOCTOR

Well, hadn't you better get me out of here, then?

COMPUTER

Error confirmed as non-fatal. Error reported to technical support. Processing can continue.

DOCTOR

Are you sure about that?

COMPUTER

Welcome, citizen. You do a great thing for your people. Please record a final message for your family after the tone.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry?

FX: BEEP TONE.

COMPUTER

Please begin recording of final message.

DOCTOR

I have no desire to leave a final message for anyone! I only want to get out of here!

COMPUTER

Then you must proceed to the End.

DOCTOR

'The End'. Is this what I think it is? Some kind of euthanasia program? Murdering the elders, so the young can visit the spa?

COMPUTER

Ten, nine, eight, seven, [six, five, four, three, two -]

DOCTOR

This is monstrous! Let me out at once! You have no right!

COMPUTER

One -

DOCTOR

Maybe this really is it...

COMPUTER

Welcome to the End.

DOCTOR

No!!!

FX: A ZASSH. DOUBLE HEART MONITOR FLATLINES.

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO

(NO REPRISE)

SCENE 16: INT. SUIT DOCK

FX: SOMETHING BIG AND HEAVY POWERING UP. THEN ELECTRONICS, SIMILAR TO THE COMPUTER SOUNDS IN THE BIRTHDAY ROOM.

COMPUTER

Activating exo-armour. Life-support at full capacity. Incoming occupant.

FX: 'ZASSH' OF ENERGY — SAME AS ENDED PART ONE — THEN:

DOCTOR

(CONTINUATION OF CRY... WHICH FALTERS AS HE REALISES HE'S NOT DEAD, JUST TELEPORTED) Noooooooo... oh. What on Earth — (GETTING BEARINGS) I'm inside something! Some kind of... robotic suit?

COMPUTER

Conscript received. Locking exo-armour.

FX: METAL STRUTS SLOTTING INTO PLACE AROUND HIS ARMS AND LEGS — HYDRAULICS ETC.

DOCTOR

Stop that right now. I'd rather my appendages weren't encased in heavy armour, thank you very much.

FX: SOUNDS CONTINUE.

DOCTOR

Not that anyone ever listens to me. The universe is renowned for paying no heed! Ouch — do be careful!

FX: CLUNK, CLUNK, CLICK!

DOCTOR

If you're quite finished?

COMPUTER

Initiating connectivity.

FX: SKREEEK — A DEVICE RAISES BEHIND THE DOCTOR'S HEAD.

DOCTOR

Now, hold on back there. That looks suspiciously like a mind probe. Whatever you're about to do, you do not have my permission to do it!

COMPUTER

Connect.

FX: DEVICE THUDS INTO THE BACK OF THE DOCTOR'S HEAD –
ELECTRONIC TRANSFER SOUNDS.

DOCTOR

Get out of my head!

COMPUTER

Accessing experiential logs.

DOCTOR

You mean – my memories?

FX: POWERING UP SOUNDS.

COMPUTER

Psychokinetic reserves at one hundred per cent. Disconnect.

FX: DEVICE COMES AWAY FROM THE DOCTOR'S HEAD.

DOCTOR

Not a mind probe, then. You were gathering my memories like
fuel... Fuel for this suit?

COMPUTER

Load weapons.

FX: SEVERAL LARGE GUNS ARE DRILLED ONTO THE ARMS AND BODY OF
THE DOCTOR'S SUIT.

DOCTOR

Now that I can't abide – desist immediately. I do not carry
guns, particularly not large ones – so kindly stop attaching
them to me!

SCENE 17: **EXT. MARKETPLACE**

FX: FLIP AND OLIVIA ON THE RUN. BEHIND THEM, THE UNSEEN CREATURE CONTINUES TO SMASH THROUGH THE MARKET.

FLIP

He's making a proper mess of the market, this invisible monster.

OLIVIA

Fine by me, so long as the stalls are slowing him down.

FX: SMASH!

FLIP

Yeah, they're not slowing him down that much.

OLIVIA

We need to find another way out.

FX: THEY RUN TO STOP.

FLIP

(PUFFED) The other way out is, where – over the wall?

FX: THE BEAST'S HEAVY BREATHING.

OLIVIA

I hate to say it, but I think he's got us cornered.

SCENE 18: **INT. SUIT DOCK**

FX: FINAL DRILLING SOUND.

COMPUTER

Attachment of armatures complete. Disconnect activation dock.

FX: DOCK DISCONNECTS FROM DOCTOR, LEAVING HIM IN BULKY SUIT.

DOCTOR

Can I even walk in this thing? (HE TAKES A STEP, STUMBLES)
Whoah...!

FX: FALLS HEAVILY TO THE FLOOR.

DOCTOR

Apparently not. This may take some getting used to.

FX: MECHANICAL DOOR OPENS, OFF. SOMEBODY, ALSO IN A POWER SUIT,
ENTERS AND STOMPS OVER TO THE DOCTOR. STOPS.

JANAIYA

How are you feeling, dear?

DOCTOR

I've been better. Who are you, may I ask?

JANAIYA

My name's Janaiya. I've been exactly where you are, my dear. I know just how you're feeling. All a bit much, isn't it? Come on, let me help you up – takes a while to get used to these suits.

DOCTOR

(BEING HELPED UP) Thank you, Janaiya. I'm the Doctor.

JANAIYA

'Doctor'? You can't enlist with a name like that – you'd end up Sergeant Doctor. That's daft.

DOCTOR

Enlist? Janaiya, where am I?

JANAIYA

Welcome to the End. (BEAT) Kettle's on over at the barracks. Fancy a brew?

SCENE 19: **EXT. MARKETPLACE**

FX: THE BEAST'S HEAVY BREATHING.

FLIP

We could make a run for it in different directions. That way it'd only get one of us. Has it got horns, you think? It sounds like it might have horns.

FX: OVER THIS — ANOTHER DRONE ABOVE THEM.

OLIVIA

See that drone up there?

FLIP

Bit I'm more worried about what's in front of us, T.B.H., Olivia!

OLIVIA

Don't worry, I've got a plan. Pass me the cloth from the jam stall.

FLIP

What — this jam stall?

OLIVIA

How many other jam stalls are there?

FLIP

But if I pull the cloth, the jam'll go everywhere.

OLIVIA

I know. Look, just trust me!

FLIP

Alright. (REACHES OUT) Three, two, one — (PULLS ON TABLECLOTH)

FX: WHOLE STALL OVERTURNS, MULTIPLE JAM JARS SMASH ON FLOOR. IMMEDIATELY, THE CREATURE REACTS, SNORTS IN ALARM.

FLIP

He doesn't like the jam!

OLIVIA

Cloth, quickly!

FX: CLOTH PASSED — RUSTLING.

OLIVIA

Now give me a leg-up the side of the wall.

FLIP

Yeah, why?

OLIVIA

Hurry!

FLIP/OLIVIA

(LEG-UP EFFORT)

FLIP

What now?

OLIVIA

(CALLING) Here, you – drone! Over here!

FX: DRONE BUZZES OVER.

OLIVIA

Little bit closer. Just a little bit closer..

FX: MONSTER SNORTS WITH DISGUST.

FLIP

(WORRIED) He doesn't like the jam on him, Olivia...! He doesn't like it at all!

OLIVIA

That's it! Now – (EFFORT AS SHE THROWS CLOTH OVER DRONE) Got you!

FX: DRONE BUZZES ANGRILY – MUFFLED BY CLOTH.

DRONE

Synthetic material! Optics obscured!

FLIP

You've caught it! I get it – you're gonna whack the monster with it!

OLIVIA

That's the plan. (EFFORT – SHE JUMPS DOWN TO GROUND)

FX: MONSTER SNORTS ANGRILY, STOMPING RIGHT AT FLIP..

FLIP

So whack it, will you?!

OLIVIA

(SWINGS DRONE IN CLOTH – EFFORT)

FX: DRONE CRASHES DOWN ON BEAST'S 'HEAD'. IT GROANS AND COLLAPSES.

FLIP

Who'd have thought? It actually worked. Nice one, Livvy!

OLIVIA

I'm as surprised as you are.

FX: FLICKERING ELECTRICAL SOUND FROM THE BEAST – IT IS BECOMING VISIBLE!

FLIP

Hang about – the monster's becoming visible!

OLIVIA

Whatever was cloaking it must have been disrupted.

FLIP

Horns, see? I knew it!

OLIVIA

Like a big armoured bull up on his hind legs – with extra teeth.

FX: PULSING SOUND AND A ZAP. CLOTH FLUTTERS.

FLIP

He's vanished. Not just gone invisible again – he's properly vanished!

OLIVIA

I'm not surprised – they don't want to leave any trace behind. But I've never heard of them using anything like that before...

FLIP

Look, who are you? I thought you were spa-all-day, party-all-night girl, but now you're like, some kind of action hero? Which is awesome, by the way.

FX: AS MARKET TRADERS BEGIN TO RE-ENTER MARKETPLACE...

MARKET TRADERS

(OFF) Has it gone? /Is it safe?/ What happened?/ Look what it's done to my stall! [ETC – CONTINUES AS THEY RUSH STALL THROUGH:]

OLIVIA

We don't want to attract any more attention. (HEFTING DRONE – FX: METAL SCRAPES ON FLOOR) Help me with this thing, would you?

FLIP

Wait – you're taking the drone with you?

OLIVIA

Hopefully.

FLIP

You grab it out of the air, smash it on an invisible monster's head, and now you're nicking it?

OLIVIA

Handy bits of kit, these drones – lots of linked-up tech.

FX: FEW NUTS AND BOLTS FALL OFF DRONE AS SHE HEFTS IT.

OLIVIA

Well, handy if I can keep all the bits together.

FLIP

Hang on, I'll get those.

OLIVIA

Thanks.

FLIP

So where are we taking it?

OLIVIA

Home. And... we?

FLIP

I'm coming with you. I don't know anyone else round here – so you're some sort of top secret ninja, I'm sticking with you.

OLIVIA

OK – we. My flat's not far – we can hide it there and do a little tinkering. Come on.

FX: THEY EXIT, CARRYING DRONE.

SCENE 20: INT. ARMY BARRACKS

FX: HEAVY, HYDRAULIC FOOTSTEPS AS THE DOCTOR AND JANAIYA EMERGE INTO A HUGE UNDERGROUND MILITARY CAMP. LOTS OF NOISE, TARGET PRACTICE, MOVEMENT. HUNDREDS OF OTHER MECH SUITS, STOMPING, DOING TARGET PRACTICE ETC.

DOCTOR

You have... quite an army down here.

JANAIYA

Yes, it's lovely, isn't it? Noisy, mind - with all that clanking and shonking - I don't always get a good night's rest. This way, Doctor...!

FX: CROSS TO -

ROMAN

Computer, push that target back thirty metres.

FX: TARGET SLIDES BACK, OFF.

COMPUTER

Target now at one hundred and thirty metres.

FX: AS DOCTOR AND JANAIYA COME OVER -

ROMAN

(CALLING) Hey, newbie, watch this. Lock and load!

FX: HE RELOADS MASSIVE ARM CANNON WITH A SINGLE MOTION.

ROMAN

Aaaand - fire!!!

FX: HIS CANNON OPENS FIRE MASSIVELY - THE TARGET IS DESTROYED.

COMPUTER

Target... has ceased to exist.

ROMAN

(BLOWING HIS SMOKING CANNON) Not bad, huh?

JANAIYA

Doctor, I'd like you to meet my husband, Roman.

ROMAN

Nice to meet you, soldier.

DOCTOR

I thought this was a euthanasia programme, but it's recruitment. You're building an army here. A mech-suited army of... well...

JANAIYA

You can say it, we're not shy round these parts.

DOCTOR

Well, none of you are exactly spring chickens.

ROMAN

I'm eighty-two. And – dear, do you mind me saying?

JANAIYA

I'm seventy-eight years old.

ROMAN

Same as our whole battalion. All over seventy, all armed to the teeth, all war heroes in waiting. We have octogenarians, nonagenarians, even a lady in the First Armoured Corps who's just turned a hundred and four. The End is the beginning, as they say.

DOCTOR

Yes, so they do. Well, it's very impressive. More power to your electronic elbow.

ROMAN

You see old Harry over there? He's the best sniper we have – eighty-nine years old and absolutely deadly with that ocular attachment. Also, a demon at cribbage.

JANAIYA

He's just showing off now.

ROMAN

Why shouldn't I – I'm proud of our army. Take me – I've got severe arthritis, bad hip, cataracts, irregular heartbeat and none of my own teeth – but this suit makes me a fully-armoured, nicely sedated pain in the backside. You can't argue with that kind of quality of life, can you?

DOCTOR

That's largely wonderful – apart from all the guns.

ROMAN

What's that?

JANAIYA

Er... Roman and I celebrated our fifty-first wedding anniversary last week, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Congratulations. Though I can't imagine these suits go well with a candlelit meal?

JANAIYA

Oh, we made it work. Means he can still pick me up anyway – carry me across the threshold and all that.

ROMAN

Fifty-one years... It's gone in a flash, hasn't it? I remember our first date – at the ice rink. You showed me how to go backwards.

JANAIYA

Now, don't get sappy. We've got a guest.

ROMAN

I'll take every opportunity to be sappy. You have to when you're getting ready for war.

DOCTOR

War? You're going to war?

ROMAN

We're all going to war – you included, Doctor.

SCENE 21: INT. MIDDLE OFFICE

FX: CONSTANCE IS ASLEEP AT A DESK.

MIDDLEMAN

Time to wake up, my dear.

CONSTANCE

(AWAKES WITH A START) What? Where am I?

MIDDLEMAN

We don't take kindly to staff falling asleep at their desks – but as you're a new arrival, I'll let it slide.

CONSTANCE

Am I back at Bletchley?

MIDDLEMAN

I have no idea what you're saying.

CONSTANCE

No... all glass, all windows... this must be...

MIDDLEMAN

This is the Middle – welcome.

CONSTANCE

The Middle...

MIDDLEMAN

And happy birthday. Thirty-five is a year of new responsibility. There will be a welcome celebration for you at the end of the working day – with cake – but for now, just get your feet under the table, try and introduce yourself around. If I were you, I'd get a few hot drinks in, that always helps.

CONSTANCE

Where are my friends?

MIDDLEMAN

I have no idea – and it's certainly no concern of yours. I know you've had thirty-five years of ease, but this is where you knuckle down and start to pay us back.

CONSTANCE

Pay you back?

MIDDLEMAN

Our scan detects that you have an affinity for systems monitoring and deciphering – so I'm going to put you on surveillance. The End is mobilising as we speak, so why don't you start by keeping an eye on them for any irregularities. We need to be sharp – so look for anything rough.

FX: HE PRESSES A BUTTON ON THE DESK. SCREEN ACTIVATES, SHOWING STOMPING LEGIONS OF MECH-SUITS.

CONSTANCE

Good gracious. All those old people – what are they wearing?

MIDDLEMAN

Please, be respectful. Our army may be ancient, but it is equipped, trained and managed to perfection.

CONSTANCE

They're like tanks – everybody's walking around in a tank.

MIDDLEMAN

Yes. Sure. Oh, and keep an eye on this one, in particular – new recruit. His readings were very unusual, but sometimes the unusual conscripts can make the best fighters. The suit draws on their more pronounced experiences.

FX: SWITCHES FREQUENCY SO IMAGE OF THE DOCTOR, TALKING TO ROMAN AND JANAIYA APPEARS. DUB IN FROM PREVIOUS SCENE –

DOCTOR

... Well, it's very impressive. More power to your electronic elbow. [ETC]

CONSTANCE

Doct– (STOPS HERSELF) – oh. Yes, I see.

MIDDLEMAN

Don't be fooled, a lot of facelifts among that lot. (CURIOUS) Still, that's excellent work. Doesn't look a day over forty...

CONSTANCE

I'll keep an eye on him, shall I?

MIDDLEMAN

Yes. Yes, thank you...

CONSTANCE

Constance. Mrs Constance Clarke.

MIDDLEMAN

Nice to meet you, Constance. I am the Middleman. You may call me Sir.

SCENE 22: INT. ARMY BARRACKS

DOCTOR

So you're an army of the elderly.

ROMAN

Oi, less of that.

DOCTOR

Look, I'm all for the empowerment of the older generation – you can do whatever you want to do. But why? Why create a force like this?

JANAIYA

These suits – they draw power from our memories, our experiences. So us older folk, we've got the greatest resource of all: a good long life. We're veterans already, aren't we? The more you've lived, the stronger you are. No need to send the kids out to fight when we can do it for 'em – they're better off making babies.

FX: SOUNDS OF THE ARMY ALL AROUND THEM.

DOCTOR

Ants...

JANAIYA

I'm sorry?

DOCTOR

In an ant colony, the young are protected, and it's the oldest ants who are sent out of the nest to carry out all the most dangerous jobs. They've lived a life, they've served the queen well, and they're now expendable. Protect the young, protect the queen. They dutifully trot out and carry the biggest seeds, scout the most dangerous terrain and defend the colony against attackers until their dying breath.

ROMAN

So we're ants then, are we?

DOCTOR

Growing old does not make you expendable. But somebody round here obviously sees it that way.

JANAIYA

I used to keep one of those little ant farms – so you can see through the side. They all looked the same to me – young or old.

DOCTOR

A society turned on its head.

ROMAN

Whatever you say. Look, we've got an inspection coming and you'd better be smartly turned out. Has Janaiya shown you basic movement?

DOCTOR

I think I've got it. Walking is just... think it, lean into it a little and...

FX: DOCTOR'S RIGHT FOOT CLUNKS FORWARD. BUT HE STUMBLES – STEAM AND SIRENS SOUNDING ON HIS SUIT.

DOCTOR

Whoops! I feel like a fawn learning to walk.

ROMAN

Pretty big fawn.

JANAIYA

You've just got to think it as deep as you can. It can help to summon up a memory – to add fuel to the fire. Try not to make it too profound a recollection – tends to jam the suits up a bit. Just keep it light for now – think happy thoughts, happy memories.

DOCTOR

Yes. I feel very uneasy about all of this. The inside of my head is not a place fit for machines. There aren't many straight lines in there.

ROMAN

Whatever you say. Right, let's show you how your artillery works. You've got your ten-thousand-round minigun here, and on the other arm there's your phased plasma rifle – that one can give a real kick...

DOCTOR

That won't be necessary, Roman. I'm not one for firearms, and I certainly won't be turned into a weapon.

ROMAN

You've not got a lot of choice, I reckon.

DOCTOR

We'll see about that. I don't intend to stay cooped up in this suit of armour against my will. Let's see...

FX: HE FIDDLES WITH THE ARM – PRESSES A FEW BUTTONS.

DOCTOR

If I can just recalibrate the...

ROMAN

Good luck with that.

DOCTOR

No... or maybe I can...

FX: DOCTOR PRESSES BUTTONS – CLICK CLICK CLICK. THEN A LOUD BEEP COMES BACK AT HIM.

DOCTOR

Well, there's no need to be rude.

JANAIYA

Doctor, the suit is part of you now – no need to fiddle with it. You'll work in it, sleep in it, do everything in it.

ROMAN

Yeah, everything.

JANAIYA

Thank you, dear.

DOCTOR

So I'm a prisoner? We're all prisoners.

FX: ROMAN IS BACK TO DOING HIS TARGET PRACTICE, LOCKING AND LOADING AS HE TALKS.

ROMAN

Actually, we don't see it like that.

DOCTOR

Well, how do you see it?

ROMAN

This here's an honour. We're fighting for our people –

JANAIYA

For our grandchildren.

ROMAN

Doctor, I played with model soldiers when I was a boy, and I looked up to my Granddad when he joined up. All I wanted to do was be like him. And now I am. We fight for our world. We're the End – we've been put in these suits to fight to the bitter one. And you'll be fighting alongside, I have no doubt.

DOCTOR

I am not... I will not fight anyone. I am not a soldier.

CROSS TO –

SCENE 23: INT. MIDDLE OFFICE [CONTINUOUS]

FX: ROMAN AND DOCTOR HEARD OVER MONITORS.

ROMAN

(D) If you're no soldier, then coward you are.

DOCTOR

(D) Well. So be it.

FX: THEY HEAD OFF IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. JUST AMBIENT BARRACKS NOISE RUNS UNDERNEATH —

CONSTANCE

What are you up to, Doctor...?

COMPUTER

I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that.

CONSTANCE

(MOMENTARILY STARTLED) Ah! (COLLECTS HERSELF) A computing machine that talks to you. How... disarming.

COMPUTER

I am here to assist you.

CONSTANCE

Very well. Tell me everything I can do from here. From this desk.

COMPUTER

You have access to all monitoring equipment on Formicia.

FX: PING! REMINDER SOUND.

COMPUTER

Reminder: You have one birthday allocation.

CONSTANCE

I do wish people would stop rabbiting on about my birthday.

COMPUTER

You are allocated one birthday message. You will receive your next allocation in twelve months' time.

CONSTANCE

Well, why didn't you say? Happy birthday to me. Can I contact anyone?

COMPUTER

You may use your birthday allocation to send a one-way message to any one individual on Formicia.

CONSTANCE

Then... I would like to send a message to the Doctor. (SOTTO)
Sorry, Flip...

SCENE 24: **EXT. CITY PARK**

FX: FLIP AND OLIVIA WALKING QUICKLY, PAST CARNIVAL REVELLING (AS BEFORE). STILL CARRYING DRONE.

FLIP

Hang about, can we put this drone of yours down a minute? It's heavier than it looks.

OLIVIA

Alright, but not for long.

FX: THEY STOP. CARNIVAL SOUNDS CARRY.

FLIP

What's all that? Another party?

OLIVIA

The all-nighters start early – they'll be going from now till the sun comes up.

FLIP

I used to like that. Find it all a bit exhausting now.

OLIVIA

Welcome to my world. I'm sick of it. The young people on Formicia – they're smart, they're really smart – but they don't use it, they just muck about. It's all parties and hangovers, whilst an army goes to war in our name. And there's more and more of us who just aren't accepting that as the status quo.

FLIP

So you're... what are you? A secret agent? Undercover as a spoilt little rich kid?

OLIVIA

I'm not undercover – I'm me. I just... I have to wear that face you first met to get by, to not get noticed. But I'd much rather not wear it. I play the game, but underneath I've got my own game. I want to change all this – bring it down.

FLIP

Alright! Can I help?

OLIVIA

Look, where are you three from? I mean, really?

FLIP

Ok. Right. You're giving straight answers so maybe I owe you a few two. The Doctor, Constance and I – we're not from round here.

OLIVIA

You're from the outskirts?

FLIP

The out-outskirts. Really out. A few light years out. The outer-space-skirts.

OLIVIA

You're kidding.

FLIP

I'm not, you know.

OLIVIA

No-one's visited this city since we were sealed in.

FLIP

You were sealed in? By who?

OLIVIA

Oh, we did it. The surface has been uninhabitable for hundreds of years, thanks to us. We dropped a bomb to end a war. But it's OK – we just do our own thing down here.

FLIP

Right – next question: everybody keeps banging on about how old people are here – how come?

OLIVIA

OK, let's do the basics. On Formicia, the young get to have fun. From when you're born through to your thirty-fifth birthday, you just enjoy yourself. No work, no responsibilities.

FLIP

Now, I like that bit. I know you're suddenly not keen, but it sounds great to me.

OLIVIA

But you turn thirty-five, and you're not a Beginner anymore – you're in the Middle.

FLIP

Right! Like Constance! So what happens to people in the Middle?

OLIVIA

When you turn thirty-five, you go there and you never come back. And that... is where my Dad is.

SCENE 25: INT. MIDDLE OFFICE

(CONSTANCE FINISHING HER MESSAGE TO THE DOCTOR.)

CONSTANCE

... Anyway, that's it – Constance Clarke signing off. See you soon, Doctor Smith.

FX: SHE PRESSES A BUTTON.

COMPUTER

Birthday message concluded.

CONSTANCE

Thank you, computing machine. (GETTING UP) Excuse me.

COMPUTER

You must remain at your workstation. You have monitoring duties.

CONSTANCE

I'm just going for a shufti. If you even know what that means. Don't worry, I'll catch up. But in the meantime – this is your off switch, I take it?

FX: CONSTANCE PRESSES THE OFF BUTTON.

COMPUTER

Powering down...

CONSTANCE

Nighty night. (TO SELF) Now, let's find out where I am.

FX: FOLLOW HER AS SHE PROWLs AROUND THE OFFICE. VERY LOW-LEVEL OFFICE CHATTER AND TYPING, COMPUTER PRINT-OUTS ETC.

CONSTANCE

(UNDER HER BREATH) Reminds me of Bletchley – all the busy little worker ants. The machines are a little more compact, mind you.

FLIP

(DISTANT, OFF SCREEN) Ah, that thing – big revolving glass tower, like Docklands had an acid trip.

CONSTANCE

Now, I'd know that voice anywhere..

YORK

I'm sorry?

CONSTANCE

Oh! Sorry to interrupt your... monitoring. I'm new. Mrs Constance Clarke.

YORK

Nice to meet you – Callum. Callum York.

CONSTANCE

Nice you meet you too.

YORK

Wait – you're very new, aren't you? Today new?

CONSTANCE

Indeed. (IRONIC) Happy birthday to me.

YORK

Ha. I sympathise – I'd happily abolish birthdays if I could.

CONSTANCE

A man after my own heart.

YORK

So this is us. Not a bad team and not a bad view.

CONSTANCE

It's very beautiful. Though all the revolving makes my head spin.

YORK

You get used to it.

CONSTANCE

(LOOKING BACK TO SCREENS) And... who are these two you're keeping an eye on?

YORK

(HASTILY) Oh, ignore them – I shouldn't even be monitoring this sector, really. Please, keep it to yourself.

CONSTANCE

Oh, you can trust me – loose lips sink ships and all that.

YORK

What?

CONSTANCE

So who are they?

YORK

The girl with the voice that goes right through you – I'm not sure. And the other... well... she's my daughter.

CONSTANCE

Ah.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 26: **EXT. CITY PARK**

FX: OLIVIA AND FLIP HAVE RESUMED WALKING. CARNIVAL MORE DISTANT.

OLIVIA

I've not seen him in person since I was six. We used to be quite a team. He was really tall, but I think that's just because I was really small. Then it was his thirty-fifth birthday, and suddenly he wasn't here anymore. He was in there. The Middle.

FLIP

Daft question but... can't you just visit?

OLIVIA

No-one out, nobody in. They say the Middle need to concentrate on their duties. They've had their fun. I think that's why we enjoy ourselves so much out here when we're young – because we know what's coming.

FLIP

Wow. So you've not seen him for, like...

OLIVIA

Twenty-five years.

FLIP

Wow.

OLIVIA

All we get are one-way messages. On his birthday, he can send me a video message. On my birthday, I can send the same to him. It's not much of a conversation, to be honest. I just see him looking a bit older each time... until he turns seventy, of course.

FLIP

Why, what happens then?

SCENE 27: **EXT. ARMY BARRACKS**

FX: BACK WITH MOBILISING ARMY. COMMOTION ALL AROUND. A SIREN SOUNDS.

COMPUTER

(FX: OVER P.A.) The battalion will prepare for a special announcement.

JANAIYA

Ah, Roman!

ROMAN

I knew it. That's brilliant, that is.

DOCTOR

What is? What's going on?

JANAIYA

We'll be hearing from the Middleman shortly – there must be big news coming.

ROMAN

Maybe our marching orders!

DOCTOR

This Middleman – who is he?

JANAIYA

He's in charge. The Middleman's in charge of everything.

DOCTOR

Well, that's not what his name would suggest. But if he is in charge, maybe I can reason with him to –

FX: A 'PING' FROM THE DOCTOR'S SUIT.

DOCTOR

What was that? Am I done like a microwave meal?

JANAIYA

You've got a birthday message – on your comm-link, see? That's nice – a very special occasion when that happens.

DOCTOR

Well, how do I play it?

ROMAN

Just think it.

DOCTOR

Very well – 'play'.

FX: SCREEN ON DOCTOR'S ROBOT ARM FLARES INTO LIFE. ON THE SCREEN IS CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE

(D) Doctor? Doctor, I hope you're receiving this safely.

DOCTOR

Constance! Mrs Clarke, where are you?

ROMAN

Don't work like that – one-way traffic only. You do the listening.

DOCTOR

Oh.

CONSTANCE

(D) I see you have a new metal wardrobe – very, er, fetching.

DOCTOR

Yes, thank you, Mrs Clarke.

JANAIYA

She can't hear you.

DOCTOR

I know, I know.

CONSTANCE

(D) (CONFIDENTIALLY – SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE OVERHEARD) This place is distinctly odd. They seem to have it in for the over-thirty-fives. I find myself employed in the Middle – which is all rather dull and dreary, but at least I can keep an eye on you. Philippa too, I hope. I think I'm where the army generals are – miles behind the poor blessed infantry, as usual. So I'm going to do my level best to flush them out.

DOCTOR

Good work!

CONSTANCE

(D) ... Anyway, that's it – Constance Clarke signing off. See you soon, Doctor Smith. [NB: THIS LINE EXACTLY AS HEARD AT TOP OF SCENE 25]

FX: MESSAGE ENDS.

DOCTOR

Janaiya, Roman – you've worked there, you must know all about the Middle?

JANAIYA

What's to know? It was all very, very dull. The End is far more interesting!

FX: SIREN SOUNDS ACROSS THE CAMP. COMMOTION.

ROMAN

This is it.

JANAIYA

Stand to attention, Doctor, or they'll reprimand you.

DOCTOR

I'll stand here as I please, thank you, Janaiya. I feel like giving someone a piece of my mind.

FX: A DRONE FLIES IN FROM ABOVE.

DOCTOR

What's that little fellow up to?

JANAIYA

It's a holo-matter unit. Watch.

FX: SHUTTER ON THE DRONE SLIDES OPEN; BRIGHT LIGHT SHINES OUT WITH A 'WUUUUVVVVVVV' SOUND. THE MIDDLEMAN IS PROJECTED AS A 50 FT HIGH HOLOGRAM, STOOD IN FRONT OF HIS ARMY.

JANAIYA

There he is – the Middleman.

DOCTOR

Good grief – who projects a fifty-foot hologram of themselves? The ego is insurmountable!

ROMAN

It ain't his fault he can't leave the Middle. And I like him big. Nice to have someone to look up to.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) (BOOMING, ECHOING ABOVE HIS TROOPS) The End. I salute you.

FX: ARMY STAMPS A FOOT AS ONE.

THE ARMY [WILDTRACK – INC ROMAN & JANAIYA]

The End is the beginning!

MIDDLEMAN

(D) And what a beginning you are. Our whole civilisation looks up to you with unfathomable respect. What you will do in the next twenty-four hours will echo through our future history. Your lives have been lived well... and I know you will give everything you have in return.

THE ARMY [WILDTRACK – INC ROMAN & JANAIYA]
THE END IS THE BEGINNING!

MIDDLEMAN

(D) You will inspire a generation to grow old and show valour as you do now. You safeguard your families, you protect your grandchildren with your bravery. And I have the most wonderful news. Today, within the next few hours – every man and woman of you – are going to war.

THE ARMY [WILDTRACK – INC ROMAN & JANAIYA]
WARRRRRRR! (CHEERS ETC)

MIDDLEMAN

(D) The enemy is near. You may have heard rumours, and I can confirm their truth: the Kronvos horde has returned in force.

THE ARMY [WILDTRACK – INC ROMAN & JANAIYA]
BOOOOO!

MIDDLEMAN

(D) They have dug through solid rock – through the flank of the planet itself – to reach us. Their only purpose is to wipe us out.

THE ARMY [WILDTRACK – INC ROMAN & JANAIYA]
RAWRRRRR! (BOOS ETC)

MIDDLEMAN

(D) As I speak, their army march and would reach the city in two days' time, if it were not for your sacrifice and valour. You must stop them, if Formicia is to live. Give your lives, give them without hesitation, and your deeds will be sung of [forever.]

DOCTOR

(TINY VOICE IN COMPARISON) Excuse me? Hello?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Ah. The gentleman with the excellent surgeon. I trust you're settling down into the ranks, conscript?

DOCTOR

Not particularly. Being strapped into a mobile war machine isn't my idea of a pleasant afternoon.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) You'll grow into it, I'm sure.

DOCTOR

Tell me, Mr Middleman: what is this 'Kronvos horde' you expect us to fight?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Why – the Kronvos are monsters, of course!

DOCTOR

Just 'monsters'? There must be more to them than that! What do they want?

ROMAN

They want to kill us! To wipe us out!

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Exactly!

DOCTOR

By the sounds of it, these Kronvos might say exactly the same of you! – Please tell me you've at least attempted to settle your differences, whatever they may be, by negotiation?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) You are not here to negotiate! You are here to fight!

DOCTOR

Well, maybe I don't want to fight, until someone explains exactly why I'm fighting!

JANAIYA

(CONCERN) Doctor, you need to shut up.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Are you saying you won't fight, soldier?

DOCTOR

Not as things presently stand – no!

THE ARMY [WILDTRACK]

(REACT WITH SHOCK – INTAKES OF BREATH)

ROMAN

You fool. You've done it now! You know what's going to happen now!

JANAIYA

Doctor, how could you?!

DOCTOR

I'm sorry?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) You know the rules – desertion will lead directly to the elimination of loved ones. Our cowardly comrade here has one strike against his name – so I am obliged to remove one loved one from his portfolio.

DOCTOR

What?

FX: CHITTERING DATA STREAM, OFF.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Let's have a look here – your suit reports that you have a friend in the Beginning called... 'Flip'?

DOCTOR

What if I do?

FX: HIS HOLOGRAM PRESSES A FEW BUTTONS ON A TABLET.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) I'm sorry to have to tell you that an execution drone is now on its way to make her acquaintance.

DOCTOR

What? – But you can't!

ROMAN

That's what they do to cowards. Entirely on you, that is.

DOCTOR

No!!!

SCENE 28: **INT. MIDDLE OFFICE**

FX: SMALL ALERT FROM YORK'S COMPUTER.

YORK

That's irregular. They're launching an execution drone.

CONSTANCE

That sounds like bad news for someone.

YORK

Look out there – you'll see it as it leaves.

FX: ROCKETS OFF, AS A DRONE ZOOMS AWAY FROM THE MIDDLE.

CONSTANCE

They kill people, then?

YORK

It's a punishment for cowardice. They don't take it out on the soldier, they target those you love back home.

CONSTANCE

What? – Where I'm from, the white feather is more than enough – and even that's pretty barbaric.

FX: KEYBOARD BASHING.

YORK

Let me see if I can... oh... those co-ordinates. That's my daughter!

CONSTANCE

Your daughter... and my Flip!

SCENE 29: **EXT. ARMY BARRACKS**

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Now, new recruit – rejoin your fellows and let's hear no more of this.

DOCTOR

(QUIETLY) What have I done?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) My army, ready yourself for the war to end all wars.

THE ARMY [WILD – INC ROMAN & JANAIYA]

TO THE END!

DOCTOR

(QUIETLY) I will stop this.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Ready your courage, ready your hate! Give everything you have!

THE ARMY [WILD – INC ROMAN & JANAIYA]

TO THE END!

MIDDLEMAN

(D) The End.

FX: GIANT HOLOGRAM FLICKERS OFF.

SCENE 30: **EXT. CITY STREET**

FX: OLIVIA AND FLIP ON FOOT. DRONE ENGINES DISTANT ABOVE THEM.

FLIP

Another one of your drone friends.

OLIVIA

He's a long way from home... we don't normally get them out this way.

FX: OFF - WEAPONRY CHARGING UP.

FLIP

Yeah, and the other one didn't have shooty bits sticking out, neither.

OLIVIA

What? - It's an execution drone!

FX: DRONE ACCELERATES, LOCKING ON TO THEM.

FLIP

OK... So why's it heading for us?

OLIVIA

Oh no!!!

FX: FUSILLADE OF ZAPS AS THE DRONE OPENS FIRE!

END OF PART TWO

PART THREE

REPRISE:

FLIP

Another one of your drone friends.

OLIVIA

He's a long way from home... we don't normally get them out this way.

FX: OFF - WEAPONRY CHARGING UP.

FLIP

Yeah, and the other one didn't have shooty bits sticking out, neither.

OLIVIA

What? - It's an execution drone!

FX: DRONE ACCELERATES, LOCKING ON TO THEM.

FLIP

OK... So why's it heading for us?

OLIVIA

Oh no!!!

FX: FUSILLADE OF ZAPS AS DRONE OPENS FIRE!

SCENE CONTINUES:

SCENE 31: EXT. CITY STREET [CONTINUOUS]

OLIVIA

(SHOVING FLIP) Get down!!

FLIP

(SHOVED) Oof!

FX: ZAPS IMPACT ON PAVEMENT BESIDE. DRONE WHOOSHES PAST AND UP.

FLIP

Next time, I need to be saving you from something.

OLIVIA

I don't think you're saved just yet - look, it's swinging around for another run.

FLIP

It was definitely after me, wasn't it – not you, but me. What's going on?

OLIVIA

I don't know. Run!!

FX: THEY RUN.

SCENE 32: INT. MIDDLE OFFICE

CONSTANCE

Callum, you have to do something!

YORK

What? What can I do?

CONSTANCE

That's your daughter, for heaven's sake!

YORK

Yes.

CONSTANCE

And you work here in the Middle – where that drone come from.

YORK

I helped design the software.

CONSTANCE

Then you must be able to do something!

YORK

You don't understand. If the Middleman finds out –

CONSTANCE

Shall I say it again? That is your daughter.

YORK

(BEAT) I'll do what I can.

FX: STARTS PRESSING BUTTONS.

CONSTANCE

Hang on, Flip...

SCENE 33: **EXT. CITY STREET**

FX: DRONE ENGINES ABOVE.

OLIVIA

(RUNNING) I think this is a punishment.

FLIP

(RUNNING) Why? What did I do?

OLIVIA

(RUNNING) I don't think you're the one being punished.

FLIP

(RUNNING) That's not what it feels like!

FX: ANOTHER FUSILLADE OF ZAPS.

SCENE 34: **INT. MIDDLE OFFICE**

FX: FRANTIC KEYBOARDING.

YORK

Right, I've accessed the drone's control sphere – so we can see what it sees...

CONSTANCE

And it sees our girls!

YORK

I can't shut it down, but I can influence its movements.

CONSTANCE

(A THOUGHT) In that case...

SCENE 35: **EXT. CITY STREET**

FX: DRONE ENGINES ABOVE, SWOOPING IN AT SPEED. FLIP AND OLIVIA RUN TO STOP.

FLIP

It's a dead end!!

OLIVIA

Get behind me. Maybe its programming won't allow it to shoot me, only you.

FLIP

(SHOVING HER ASIDE) No chance! – It's not seemed all that picky so far, has it?

OLIVIA

(STRUGGLING WITH FLIP) Let me!

FLIP

(STRUGGLING) No! Here it comes...! (BEAT) Why's it not shooting?

OLIVIA

Because it's heading straight for the wall!

FLIP & OLIVIA

(TOGETHER – REALISATION) Dive!!

FX: DRONE ACCELERATES INTO WALL BEHIND THEM. IT EXPLODES.

BEAT.

FLIP

That drone was really dumb. Like, properly dumb.

OLIVIA

Or maybe we have friends in the Middle.

SCENE 36: **INT. MIDDLE OFFICE**

FX: DRONE FEED HAS CUT TO STATIC.

YORK

And... the drone is down.

CONSTANCE

See, you could do something!

YORK

I'm afraid we've put ourselves in great danger. The Middleman will track that disruption. It'll take time, but he'll follow the trail – and it'll lead him straight to my work station.

CONSTANCE

Well, that's ideal.

YORK

What?

CONSTANCE

If you've nothing to lose – you'll have to help me. Won't you, Mr York?

SCENE 37: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

FX: DOOR SWISHES AS MIDDLEMAN ENTERS.

COMPUTER

Welcome home, Middleman.

MIDDLEMAN

Computer, open comm-link. Code 'A.A.F.'

COMPUTER

Establishing...

FX: SCREEN FLARES.

COMPUTER

Head Office channel open.

VIOLET

(D - OVER SCREEN) Ah. Middleman. How did your speech go?

MIDDLEMAN

Rather well, I think. Our gaggle of grandparents really went for it. The End are mobilising as we speak. They'll be on their way within the hour.

VIOLET

(D) A perfect test of their mettle. And morale is holding up well?

MIDDLEMAN

Exceptionally.

VIOLET

(D) I look forward to seeing your graphs and charts - you present them so nicely.

MIDDLEMAN

Well, there's no point in leaving a job half-done.

VIOLET

(D) When do they move?

MIDDLEMAN

Within the hour.

VIOLET

And the Kronvos?

FX: A BEEPING.

COMPUTER

Excuse me, sir.

FX: DATA TICKS ACROSS SCREEN.

MIDDLEMAN

Computer, we're in the middle of – I'm sorry, I need to call you back.

VIOLET

What's happening?

MIDDLEMAN

Just a minor procedural matter in the Middle I need to attend to. Forgive me.

VIOLET

(A BIT CROSS) Middlema–

FX: COMM LINE CUTS OUT.

MIDDLEMAN

Computer – full investigation, immediately! I want to know exactly what happened to that drone.

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

MIDDLEMAN

I'll call the boss back later.

SCENE 38: EXT. ARMY BARRACKS

FX: MUCH COMMOTION AS CATERPILLAR-TRACKED TRANSPORTS ARE FILLED WITH SUPPLIES, WEAPONS AND TROOPS.

ROMAN

(CALLING FROM OFF) Transport won't load itself, you know!

JANAIYA

Doctor – I know you're worried about your friend, but if any member of the platoon's caught shirking...

DOCTOR

... then the whole platoon gets disciplined, I presume? Alright, Janaiya, I'll help with the supplies – but not the weapons.

JANAIYA

Good.

DOCTOR

But if that fifty-foot egotist has hurt my friend, I'll be tearing down this whole place from the inside, I can assure you.

JANAIYA

Alright, just don't bang on about it. Come on, help me with the medical crates. You take that end... and (HEFTING) (FX: HYDRAULICS) ... lift.

AS THEY WADDLE UP RAMP WITH CRATE:

DOCTOR

These 'Kronvos' – what do you know about them?

JANAIYA

Well. They came before – a long time ago. That's what started all this.

DOCTOR

Another war?

JANAIYA

The war to end all wars.

DOCTOR

That type of war rarely keeps its word.

JANAIYA

And... down.

FX: THEY SETTLE CRATE IN POSITION.

JANAIYA

It was three generations back. In the days when the old were just left to be old. A Kronvos invasion force was gathering on the surface. Awful, ugly things. Our people had to defend their homes. On the first day of recruitment, nearly a million young men and women enlisted. They went away to fight. And they did not come back.

DOCTOR

Such a waste.

JANAIYA

There was only one option. The bomb that finished that war ruined the land above. That conflict wiped out an entire generation of young men and women. There was nobody to take up jobs, there was no-one to make babies, and we almost curled up and died there and then.

DOCTOR

But you didn't.

JANAIYA

No, we scraped through. But it started a way of thinking – why sacrifice the young, the future of your race, when others could take their place? Us old folk have lived a life, we're closer to the end – surely we are the more suitable soldiers?

DOCTOR

And now the old fight the battles of the young.

JANAIYA

Our Great-Grandparents formed this army and their descendants have grown up to follow in their footsteps ever since.

DOCTOR

That's a pretty warped solution, I must say.

JANAIYA

Don't you think we're up to the task?

DOCTOR

Janaiya, I don't doubt you are. You're capable of anything.

JANAIYA

Don't underestimate us, Doctor.

SCENE 39: INT. MIDDLE ATRIUM

FX: YORK AND CONSTANCE ENTER LARGE, OPEN AREA.

CONSTANCE

Good Lord – that is quite a view. Though I'm still not convinced the spinning is entirely necessary.

YORK

It'll be easier to talk out here in the atrium. Everyone has their lunch out here, it's less suspicious. – Let's sit here, by the public terminal.

FX: THEY SIT AT A BENCH.

YORK

Mrs Clarke – I need you to be honest with me.

CONSTANCE

Well, I'll try – but being honest and being believed are two quite different things.

YORK

You're thirty-five, a new recruit. They're usually pretty spoilt, lazy, takes them a bit of time to get into the swing. Not you. You're more... practical.

CONSTANCE

Why, thank you. But I'm not important. I'm really not – I'm more interested in you.

YORK

There are plenty like me. Scared little men not wanting to grow old. Look, could you just move around a little to your right?

CONSTANCE

Why? (REALISATION) Ah, so no-one can see you using the – what did you call it – 'public terminal'?

YORK

Exactly. It'll be harder to trace.

CONSTANCE

(SHIFTING) Very well.

YORK

Keep talking – make it look social. I'm going to try and access the Middleman's workstation...

FX: FURTIVE BUTTON PRESSING THROUGH:

CONSTANCE

Exactly what is it scares you so, Mr York?

YORK

I'm sixty. In ten years' time, that'll be me going to war. I'll be cannon fodder like the rest of them – and no-one will even care.

CONSTANCE

I'm sure your daughter will care.

YORK

Does it not scare you, Mrs Clarke? Getting old, I mean.

CONSTANCE

As we've established, I'm only thirty-five.

FX: YORK STOPS BUTTON-PRESSING.

YORK

In the Beginning, it was so much fun – it really was. But it went so fast. Then I reached the Middle. It was terrible at first. But in time, it stopped seeming quite so bad. The years began to shoot by. Now I find myself wishing all this would slow down, because suddenly the End is coming, and everything's going to get so much worse and it... it frightens me, Constance!

CONSTANCE

You know, it doesn't have to get worse. I'm rather looking forward to my later years – I'll have had all I can take of running around by then. It'll be bliss to put my feet up. I might keep an allotment, learn another language, write my memoirs.

YORK

Ha! You'll turn seventy and they'll cart you off to war – just like everyone else. These are best days you'll get now. Enjoy them... while they last.

SCENE 40: INT. MILITARY TRANSPORT [IN MOTION]

FX: TRANSPORT BUMPS AND RATTLES ALONG — ITS GIGANTIC MOTOR TREADS A CONSTANT.

COMPUTER

(OFF) E.T.A. to enemy force — two hours.

ROMAN

Doctor, I need to know that you've got my back. Janaiya's too.

DOCTOR

Roman, I don't even know how to work the armature of this tin suit they've put me in.

JANAIYA

That's easy. Just point your arm at the target — and think hard about shooting it.

ROMAN

Bob's your uncle, one less Kronvos.

DOCTOR

Lovely.

ROMAN

You'll do great.

DOCTOR

Roman, maybe you can help me understand — why are you allowing this to happen? I've seen what your army does to conscientious objectors, but how can you accept that and still smile?

ROMAN

Well, we just want to be useful.

DOCTOR

What?

ROMAN

I could be sitting at home, minding my old business, but I'd hate for folks to think I wasn't giving anything back.

JANAIYA

We wouldn't want to be a burden. We want to keep busy — to say thank you.

DOCTOR

By dying in a war?

ROMAN

My parents and grandparents were soldiers. Why wouldn't I want to follow in their footsteps?

DOCTOR

But you don't have to!

JANAIYA

Rather us than our children and grandchildren. Doctor, we've had good, full lives. We owe this to everyone else.

DOCTOR

Your lives are worth just as much as anyone else's.

ROMAN

And at least we get to go out together – me and Janaiya. It's always been the two of us.

JANAIYA

You won't change our minds, Doctor.

FX: HUGE EXPLOSION OUTSIDE THE TRANSPORT – WHICH SHAKES.

DOCTOR

What on Earth was –

ROMAN

We're under attack! Come on, Doctor – time to show a bit of backbone!

SCENE 41: **INT. MIDDLE ATRIUM**

FX: DATA CHITTERS ACROSS TERMINAL.

CONSTANCE

What's that?

YORK

News from the front. A Kronvos party has advanced further than expected. The troop transports are under attack.

CONSTANCE

My friend the Doctor's a new recruit...

YORK

Then he might be involved. Can he handle himself in a fight?

CONSTANCE

He's the original conscientious objector, I'm afraid.

YORK

Then let's hope he keeps his head down.

SCENE 42: **INT. MILITARY TRANSPORT/EXT. BATTLEFIELD**

FX: TRANSPORT DOOR OPENS. IMMEDIATELY — SOUNDS OF LASER FIRE OUTSIDE.

ROMAN

(SHOUTS) Come on you dogs, come meet your end! (RUSHES OUT, HOLLERING) Yaaaaaaaaa...!

DOCTOR

Does he have to shout like that?

JANAIYA

Keep close, Doctor — safety in numbers and all that.

FX: THEY STOMP OUT OF THE TRANSPORT, INTO...

SCENE 43: EXT. BATTLEFIELD [CONTINUOUS]

FX: FOLLOW THE DOCTOR AND JANAIYA AS THEY RUN INTO A SKIRMISH. FIZZING LASER BOLTS ALL AROUND, HITS AND IMPACTS THROUGH:

ROMAN

(OFF) See how you like this!

FX: FIRES ARMATURE.

FX: DISTANT KRONVOS CRIES – THE SAME CREATURES FLIP ENCOUNTERED IN THE MARKET OVER PARTS ONE/TWO.

FX: DOCTOR AND JANAIYA STOMP TO STOP.

DOCTOR

So those are the Kronvos.

JANAIYA

That's right. Looks like a reconnaissance party.

DOCTOR

Brutish looking bunch – and that armour looks pretty impenetrable.

ROMAN

(OFF) Stop slacking, Doctor! Let's get into this!

DOCTOR

I am not fighting!

JANAIYA

You don't have to. Just point and think bad thoughts. Like this. Yaaaaaa!

FX: JANAIYA STOMPS FORWARD, SCREAMING AND FIRING. A SQUAD OF KRONVOS ROAR AT HER BUT ARE TOTALLY BLOWN APART.

JANAIYA

There you go. Three down, twenty odd to go!

DOCTOR

Janaiya – you just... killed them!

JANAIYA

Oh, you are a silly fellow – come on!

FX: SHE STOMPS OUT ACROSS THE BATTLEFIELD AFTER ROMAN.

DOCTOR

Janaiya, wait... I'm still getting used to this (STUMBLES, FALLS)
Ahh!

BEAT.

DOCTOR

I'm sure there are more intuitive ways to get around. Now, which way is up?

FX: SUDDENLY, A KRONVOS IS UPON THE DOCTOR — ROARING.

DOCTOR

Ah, hello. You must be a Kronvos. (WRESTLING WITH KRONVOS)
Please, can we talk? I'd like to talk.

ROMAN

(OFF) SHOOT IT! It's got a laser bayonet!

FX: BAYONET FIZZES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY.

DOCTOR

(EFFORT — WRESTLING) Alright, then, let's wrestle. I warn you, though, I used to teach the Mountain Mauler of [Montana]

FX: ROMAN FIRES FROM OFF — BLASTING THE KRONVOS, WHICH HOWLS AND DIES.

DOCTOR

(EFFORT, PUSHING CORPSE OFF AS...)

FX: ROMAN AND JANAIYA STOMP OVER.

JANAIYA

Well, Doctor? Aren't you going to thank Roman?

DOCTOR

I was trying to talk to it! — Look, can you help shift this thing off me? These Kronvos are rather heavy.

ROMAN

No need.

DOCTOR

I beg your pardon?

FX: PULSING SOUND AND A ZAP — AS PER SCENE 19 — AS KRONVOS FLICKERS AND DISAPPEARS.

DOCTOR

Wait, what just—?

ROMAN

Kill 'em and they disappear — learnt that in training. Guess it makes for a cleaner war.

DOCTOR

These Kronvos just... disappear? (HE GETS UP) There's something very strange going on here...

ROMAN

Come on, Doctor, we've got to — (JUMPED ON) Aaaaah!!!

FX: ROARING KRONVOS LEAPS ON ROMAN, ATTACKING HIM WITH LASER BAYONET.

JANAIYA

ROMAN!!!!

FX: JANAIYA OPENS FIRE ON THE KRONVOS.

SCENE 44: INT. OLIVIA'S FLAT

FLIP

Nice flat, Livvy! I was imagining a bedsit.

OLIVIA

Not in Formicia. Not when you're young.

FX: OLIVIA DUMPS BROKEN DRONE ON A WORK TABLE.

OLIVIA

Now – let's see if I can get any sense out of this drone.

FLIP

What, so you're a hacker too?

OLIVIA

They're all connected – between each other and the Middle. It must have passcodes – something, anything that can get us past the Middle's security. To my Dad.

FX: SHE CONNECTS A LAPTOP-LIKE DEVICE TO THE DRONE.

FLIP

Yeah, and Connie too!

OLIVIA

If we can use him to connect to the mainframe – we can at least see what's going on around here. – Here we go.. The Middle is broadcasting something right across its network.

FX: SHE FIDDLES SOME MORE AND A PICTURE APPEARS ON HER LAPTOP. BATTLE SOUNDS, OVER TINY SPEAKER, AS IN PREVIOUS SCENE (WE SHOULDN'T HEAR DOCTOR ETC THOUGH).

OLIVIA

Wow – it's the End. They've gone into battle already.

FLIP

Look at them. Like Dad's Army meets The Terminator.

OLIVIA

They're heroes.

FLIP

Wait – those things they're fighting.. they're like the monster in the market! (EXCITEDLY) Oh, and that's not the only thing I recognise! There he is! There's the Doctor!

OLIVIA

Helping carry a body. I wonder what's happened?

SCENE 45: INT. MILITARY TRANSPORT

FX: THE SKIRMISH IS OVER. AS JANAIYA AND THE DOCTOR CARRY ROMAN'S BODY ON BOARD...

COMPUTER

(VIA P.A., OFF) Immediate Kronvos threat eliminated.

DOCTOR

(EFFORT) Set him down here, Janaiya – there may still be time.

FX: AS THEY SET ROMAN DOWN...

ROMAN

(DYING) Not a lot you can do, I reckon... That Kronvos ran right through me with its laser bayonet.

JANAIYA

Roman, don't you dare leave me.

COMPUTER

(VIA P.A., OFF) Seal transports. Mission resumes.

FX: TRANSPORT DOOR SEALS. TRANSPORT RUMBLES OFF THROUGH –

ROMAN

Janaiya, love, this suit is the best life-support we've got. I can feel... I can feel it fading.

JANAIYA

We were supposed to go together.

ROMAN

Typical, isn't it? I've been looking forward to this fight all my life and then I go out in the first round.

JANAIYA

You were wonderful, Roman.

ROMAN

Was I? That's good... just like Granddad...

JANAIYA

I love you.

ROMAN

My Janaiya, I love you too. You know what they say... the End is the beginning.

JANAIYA

The End is the beginning. Doctor, you say it too.

DOCTOR

(HOLLOWLY) "The End is the beginning."

ROMAN

The beginning... (DIES)

JANAIYA

Oh. Oh... (WEEPS)

FX: THE TRANSPORT RUMBLES ON.

SCENE 46: INT. OLIVIA'S FLAT

FLIP

New plan, Livvy – we need to get to the Doctor.

OLIVIA

But he's gone to war.

FLIP

Exactly – he's gone to war. He'll be a rubbish soldier – absolutely rubbish.

OLIVIA

There's no way they'll let under-seventies through to the front line.

FLIP

Then... lightbulb! This drone – it's the sort that beamed the Doctor and Connie away in the first place, right?

OLIVIA

I presume so.

FLIP

So... maybe we can make it do the same to us?

OLIVIA

What?

FLIP

Me and my mates were only seventeen when we used to go clubbing in Walthamstow. You had to be twenty-one to get in anywhere, so we'd call up Dodgy Steve for fake I.D. – Get it? We faked our age!

OLIVIA

(REALISATION) You faked your age...

SCENE 47: **INT. MIDDLE ATRIUM**

FX: PING FROM TERMINAL.

YORK

That's it – I'm into the Middleman's system.

CONSTANCE

Good work, Mr York.

FX: DATA CHITTERS.

YORK

(PUZZLED) Strange. His itinerary shows a corporate social in the penthouse gallery this afternoon – V.I.P. access only, high end catering booked. What are they...

CONSTANCE

Gathering to watch the fighting, I presume.

YORK

Why would they do that?

CONSTANCE

That's generals all the universe over. Making all the decisions over a splendid vintage, miles from the front.

YORK

The Middleman's private offices are up in the penthouse. His private workstation, too. – Are you thinking what I'm thinking, Mrs Clarke?

CONSTANCE

I'd say we were of one mind, Mr York...

SCENE 48: **INT. MILITARY TRANSPORT [IN MOTION]**

COMPUTER

(D) Convoy now one kilometre from main Kronvos force. All crew at battle stations.

DOCTOR

I'm so sorry, Janaiya.

JANAIYA

Roman knew what he'd signed up for. He was... well, he was prepared.

DOCTOR

For himself, maybe. But he'd never have been prepared, if it had been you.

COMPUTER

(D) Enemy force coming into range.

JANAIYA

No more tears. Roman would have wanted me to carry on.

DOCTOR

Carry on? Your husband was just killed – you can't possibly 'carry on'!

JANAIYA

I can. And you're coming with me.

SCENE 49: INT. MIDDLE PENTHOUSE

FX: SMALL PARTY. CLINK OF GLASSES, DISCREET LAUGHTER. KNIFE TAPED ON GLASS FOR ATTENTION.

MIDDLEMAN

(TO CROWD) Ladies and gentlemen – Middle managers – may I have your attention?

GUESTS [WILDTRACK]

('SHHHH' AS HUSH DESCENDS)

MIDDLEMAN

(TO CROWD) The brave warriors of the End are about to engage the main Kronvos force. Your hard work in preparation for this glorious day has not gone unnoticed. So let us watch together, as their triumph unfolds!

GUESTS [WILDTRACK]

(APPLAUD POLITELY)

FX: CROSS TO PENTHOUSE ENTRANCE. CONSTANCE AND YORK ARE CREEPING IN.

CONSTANCE

(SOTTO) Looks like we've missed the speeches, thank goodness.

YORK

(SOTTO) Keep your voice down and try not to draw attention to yourself.

CONSTANCE

(SOTTO) I'll do my best. All rather grim, isn't it? A big screen showing live footage from a war. But the Pathe newsreel was never this vulgar.

YORK

(SOTTO) This way – round the side...

CONSTANCE

(SOTTO) I take it that's the Middleman's den?

YORK

(SOTTO) Yes. He's busy playing to the crowd – now's our chance.

FX: THEY MOVE OFF.

CROSS BACK TO: THE MIDDLEMAN POURING CHAMPAGNE.

MIDDLEMAN

(TO CROWD) I'm told the transports are coming to a halt – shall we wish our soldiers well?

GUESTS [WILDTRACK]
(CHEER POLITELY)

MIDDLEMAN
(ASIDE, INTO HIS COMM LINK) This is a message to the End..

CROSS DIRECTLY TO:

SCENE 50: INT. MILITARY TRANSPORT [IN MOTION] [CONTINUOUS]

FX: MIDDLEMAN'S VOICE COMES OVER INTERNAL P.A.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) ... I'm informed that you are about to engage the main Kronvos force.

DOCTOR

I'm really not a fan of this man.

JANAIYA

Shhh.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) All I can say is – good luck, and good hunting. Make us proud.

SCENE 51: INT. OLIVIA'S FLAT

FX: CONCLUDING BEEPS AS OLIVIA FINISHES REPROGRAMMING DRONE.

OLIVIA

OK, I've adjusted the drone's scanning module so it should overestimate our ages by sixty years.

FLIP

It'll see us as pretty ancient, then?

OLIVIA

If I've got it right.

FLIP

(OLD CRONE VOICE) And I won't have to do my old lady voice?

OLIVIA

Erm... no. You don't have to do that. Here we go.

FX: SHE PRESSES A BUTTON AND THE DRONE'S SYSTEMS SPRING INTO LIFE. IT HOVERS UP.

FLIP

It's not going to fly away, is it?

OLIVIA

Just stay nice and still.

DRONE

Citizens detected. Age scan activate.

FX: ELECTRONIC SCAN, AS BEFORE.

DRONE

Scanning, scanning...

OLIVIA

Get on with it...

DRONE

Subject age: eighty-five.

FLIP

And you don't look a day over twenty-one.

DRONE

Proceed to the End.

OLIVIA

See you soon.

FX: DRONE TRANSMATS OLIVIA (AS BEFORE).

FLIP

OK, now me.

FX: ELECTRONIC SCAN.

DRONE

Scanning...

FLIP

Still tickles.

DRONE

Subject age... eighty-two. Proceed to the End.

FX: AS FLIP'S TRANSMATTED -

FLIP

(FX) We're coming for you, Doctor!

CROSS TO:

SCENE 52: INT. THE BIRTHDAY ROOM [CONTINUOUS]

FX: AS IN PART ONE — REVERSE FX AS FLIP IS BEAMED INTO THE RESTRAINING DOCK.

FLIP

Right — where am I? (REALISATION) I can't move!

OLIVIA

(OFF) That's not our only problem.

FLIP

Livvy? You all right? Can't turn to see you.

FX: HEART MONITOR.

COMPUTER

Welcome, citizen. You do a great thing for your people. Please record a final message for your family after the tone.

FLIP

No need for that — I'm ready for war! No family, nothing like that — just beam me down into the army, eh?

FX: SMALL ALARM SENSOR.

COMPUTER

Alert — subject physiology does not match designated age.

OLIVIA

(OFF) You too.

FLIP

(TO COMPUTER) You're not meant to actually *look* at the dodgy I.D., you know!

COMPUTER

Second intrusion into birthday room confirmed. Preparing to terminate intruders.

FLIP

WHAT?

SCENE 53: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

YORK

There we go – the Middleman's private workstation...

CONSTANCE

Just be speedy, Mr York.

FX: SMALL ALARM SENSOR (AS IN PREVIOUS SCENE).

YORK

I will be. – Wait. There's an alarm in the birthday room.

CONSTANCE

The what?

YORK

The chamber they use to screen new recruits to the End... it's showing two intruders. Both redesignated: Beginning. – There they are, see?

CONSTANCE

Philippa! And your daughter!

YORK

You don't understand. Standard protocol is to terminate intruders.

CONSTANCE

In which case, we need to get them out of there!

SCENE 54: INT. THE BIRTHDAY ROOM

FX: WEAPONRY POWERS UP.

COMPUTER

Termination mode: on.

FLIP

But you can't! I'm too young to die!

OLIVIA

(OFF) Don't say that!!

FX: OVER SPEAKERS —

CONSTANCE

(D) Flip! Can you hear me?

FLIP

Connie! Is that you? Where are you?! This computer wants to kill us!

CONSTANCE

(D) Try not to panic, we're working on it. (ASIDE) Mr York?

YORK

(D; OFF) Nearly there!

OLIVIA

(OFF) Dad?!?

COMPUTER

(GLITCHY) Termination mode: on. On. Oooooon. — Off.

FLIP

Phew!

FX: ELECTRONIC SCAN.

COMPUTER

Rescanning. Subject age... eighty-four. Transport to the End.

FLIP

That's more like it.

FX: SHE IS BEAMED OUT AGAIN.

SCENE 55: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

CONSTANCE

They're safe?

YORK

If you can call it safe. I couldn't send them back, so they've been sent direct to the war zone.

MIDDLEMAN

(APPROACHING FROM OFF) Out of the frying pan, into the fire.

YORK

(TURNING) Middleman!

MIDDLEMAN

What are you two doing in my private suite?

CONSTANCE

(COOL) We wandered in from the party. We didn't realise this was a restricted area. So there's really no need to point a gun at us.

MIDDLEMAN

You might not have known better, Mrs Clarke. But Mr York certainly does.

YORK

Middleman, please -

MIDDLEMAN

Callum. Shush.

FX: MIDDLEMAN BLASTS HIM WITH ENERGY BOLT. YORK FALLS TO FLOOR.

CONSTANCE

What did you do that for? (CHECKING HIM) He's still alive.

MIDDLEMAN

Oh! Did you want me to kill him?

CONSTANCE

No!

MIDDLEMAN

Then hush, or I will. - Now: I have an army to address...

SCENE 56: INT. GREAT CAVE

FX: ARMoured TRANSPORTS COME TO A HALT IN A HUGE CAVERN.
ELECTRONIC DOORS OPEN. ARMY START TO EMERGE, INCLUDING —

JANAIYA

There they are, Doctor — see?

DOCTOR

The massed ranks of the Kronvos! All in formation. Like they're waiting.

JANAIYA

Murdering brutes!

FX: MIDDLEMAN AGAIN APPEARS AS A GIGANTIC HOLO AVATAR.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Brave soldiers — I stand with you at your finest hour!

DOCTOR

Him again!

FX: KRONVOS HORDE ADVANCING — RUNNING — ROARING. CONTINUES THROUGH:

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Here they come — the horde of Kronvos! Ready arms! And remember: the End is the beginning!

END TROOPS [WILDTRACK]

THE END IS THE BEGINNING!

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Good luck all.

FX: HIS HOLOGRAM DISAPPEARS.

JANAIYA

This is it, Doctor. All of us against all of them.

DOCTOR

I can't stand by in the middle of a massacre!

JANAIYA

So fight, Doctor! Fight!

FX: 2 x HYDRAULIC SUITS RUN UP FROM OFF.

FLIP

Doctor! It's me! Doctor!!!

DOCTOR

Flip?! What are you doing here?!

FLIP

Aren't you pleased to see us? You wouldn't believe the trouble we had getting here, me and my mate Livvy.

OLIVIA

Hello.

FLIP

You remember Livvy, right?

DOCTOR

This is no time for the social niceties, Flip! This is a battlefield! Quite possibly, we're all about to die!

FX: KRONVOS LET OFF A VOLLEY OF FIRE. ANSWERED BY THE END.
CONTINUES THROUGH -

FLIP

Oh yeah - those guys. I wanted to tell you - we've bumped into one of them already.

DOCTOR

What?

OLIVIA

In the city. It was after us.

FLIP

It was invisible, and then it flickered a lot - then, briefly, like by accident, it looked just like those things.

DOCTOR

And then it disappeared?

FLIP

That's right.

OLIVIA

How did you know that?

DOCTOR

I finally know what I'm fighting.

JANAIYA

Here they come! Doctor - hold the line!

FX: KRONVOS HORDE CHARGING, FIRING.

END TROOPS [WILDTRACK]

To the End! To the End!

DOCTOR

Flip, come here. – Here!

FLIP

What? Doctor – what are you doing?

FX: BLEEPS ON FLIP'S ARMATURE.

DOCTOR

I'm modifying your armature – if I can set it to just the right frequency, and reroute all the power of your memories into one single energy blast... we just might do it.

FLIP

Do what?

DOCTOR

You'll see. Let's turn you round and... fire.

FLIP

What?

DOCTOR

Trust me. Just aim at the Kronvos, think about firing – and you'll fire.

JANAIYA

That's the spirit!

FLIP

You'd better be right about this.

FX: A COLOSSAL BLAST OF ENERGY FROM FLIP'S SUIT, WITH A DEAFENING NOISE – STOPPING EVERYONE ON THE BATTLEFIELD IN THEIR TRACKS. SILENCE.

SCENE 57: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

MIDDLEMAN

No... no, that's not possible...

CONSTANCE

That'll be the Doctor, then.

SCENE 58: **INT. GREAT CAVE**

FX: THE NOISE FROM FLIP'S GUN IS ONLY JUST DYING DOWN.

JANAIYA

The Kronvos – they're frozen...

OLIVIA

Frozen in their tracks.

DOCTOR

And entirely harmless. I hope. (TURNS TO STOMP OFF)

FLIP

Hang about, where are you going?

JANAIYA

You can't go into the Kronvos line!

FX: CROSS TO –

SCENE 59: INT. GREAT CAVE – AMONG KRONVOS [CONTINUOUS]

FX: WITH DOCTOR AS HE STOMPS ACROSS THE BATTLEFIELD TOWARDS THE FROZEN KRONVOS ARMY.

DOCTOR

(LOUDLY) There was no Kronvos Army. There never was. You see this chap here?

FX: HE TAPS A GIGANTIC KRONVOS ON THE NOSE – IT GOES 'KLONK'.

DOCTOR

This is no soldier. This is a solid-state hologram. Capable of weight, touch, killing, even – but not actually real!

FX: JANAIYA & FLIP APPROACH.

JANAIYA

This can't be...

DOCTOR

I reprogrammed Flip's cannon to overload their holo-matrix. Their whole Horde is a fake. (LOUDLY AGAIN) You – the End – you are brave and valiant, but you have been deceived. There is no army for you to fight.

JANAIYA

But why... why?

FX: MIDDLEMAN'S AVATAR BEAMING INTO THE FRAY.

DOCTOR

Maybe the Middleman can shed some light on that.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) You again! – I knew I should have disposed of you –

DOCTOR

... when you had the chance?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) I still can.

FLIP

He's got a point. Probably best not to remind him.

DOCTOR

Yes, well – before you do, Middleman: would you care to explain to your army why they have no-one to fight? Why your war was a lie?

JANAIYA

A lie... it was all a lie... my Roman...

MIDDLEMAN

(D) The Kronvos were necessary to test my army – to see if our heroes are truly ready. But none of them matter anymore, and that's your fault. (ASIDE) Computer, delete Kronvos.

FX: KRONVOS ARMY WARP OUT OF EXISTENCE.

END TROOPS [WILDTRACK]

(GASPS)

MIDDLEMAN

(D) The Doctor, is it? Well, Doctor – you've just ruined the experiment. A hundred years' work, ruined – pff!

DOCTOR

What do you mean, 'experiment'?

MIDDLEMAN

(D) We'd found a new shape for society – a new shape that worked. And you've just charged in and destroyed it.

DOCTOR

If that means an end to this phoney war, then I think that's very good news.

MIDDLEMAN

(D) Well, you say that. But I have no need for this lab anymore. I want it wiped clean. I want no-one to ever know it was ever here. And so: the rats can help me clean the lab.

FLIP

Doctor... what's he on about?

MIDDLEMAN

(D; ALOUD) Hear me, army of mine. The End is not the beginning. The End is just that – there is nothing more.

JANAIYA

No...!

MIDDLEMAN

(D; ALOUD) You are each installed in an armoured suit of my design. Which means: I can over-ride the control of each and every one. Army – turn, about face!

FX: HYDRAULICS ETC AS THE ENTIRE ARMY IS TURNED AS ONE TO FACE THE OTHER WAY – INCLUDING THE DOCTOR'S SUIT.

JANAIYA

I can't stop myself.

FLIP

Me neither.

DOCTOR

(TO MIDDLEMAN) What are you playing at now?

MIDDLEMAN

(D; ALOUD) You will all now return to the city... and you will raze it to the ground!!

DOCTOR

What?!

MIDDLEMAN

(D; ALOUD) You will destroy everything and everyone in the city. Your families included.

JANAIYA

No – you can't make us!

DOCTOR

This is monstrous! (FORCED TO MARCH) Ahh!

FX: AS THE END LINES MARCH OFF –

MIDDLEMAN

Go forth my army – go forth, and wipe the slate clean. Then, maybe, we can start all over again.

END OF PART THREE

PART FOUR

(NO REPRISE)

SCENE 60: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

MIDDLEMAN

It isn't my birthday, but I'd like to send a message. Computer, you can deliver this to all families in Formicia.

FX: BEEP TONE.

MIDDLEMAN

Hello. I wanted to let you all know how much I care about you. I've been your Middleman for nearly two decades and it's been an honour to see Formicia grow. We've cheered as our elder citizens have joined the ranks of the End and prepared for a War that would protect and strengthen us all. I am here to tell you now that this War is over and we have lost. You have lost. Please hug your loved ones close and think well on the happy moments in your life. Death is coming to you. You will recognise your attackers – and maybe that is the end we all deserve. This society was a great experiment. But all experiments can fail. We have failed, I have failed – and for that, I am sorry. Message ends.

(TO CONSTANCE) Do you think I got the tone right, Mrs Clarke?

CONSTANCE

I'm not sure why you're even bothering – you evidently have nothing but contempt for your people.

MIDDLEMAN

I am a Middleman. The clue is in the name. I simply follow orders. My superiors on the surface couldn't care less about the test subjects, so neither do I. We've violated the terms of the test study, so that's it, over, pointless – who cares?

CONSTANCE

(SARCASTIC) No, indeed: why care about any of the men, women and children you've just sentenced to death?

MIDDLEMAN

I'm glad we see eye-to-eye on this. I shall be on my way up now, I think. Computer – initialise exo-armour.

FX: WALL PANEL OPENS. MIDDLEMAN'S EXO-ARMOUR IS REVEALED.

COMPUTER

Exo-suit ready for integration.

MIDDLEMAN

Let's hope this still fits me. I've had a few dinners since the last time I wore it.

FX: AS THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES, THE MIDDLEMAN'S SUIT IS ATTACHING ITSELF TO HIS BODY, WITH HYDRAULICS.

CONSTANCE

What kind of "experiment" was it, anyhow? What was the point?

MIDDLEMAN

It began with a question: what use are the old? They retire, they consume precious resources, and then they fade away. But we wanted more from our ageing citizens. We wanted them to prove their worth – not to sponge off the state, but to defend it. And then – if the worst happened, and they didn't come home from the battlefield, well... surely that'd be better than sacrificing the young?

CONSTANCE

Where I'm from, we lost many of our young men – and women. They wouldn't have wanted to send anyone else in their place, least of all their grandmothers. They had courage. Where is your courage?

MIDDLEMAN

'Courage'! What a strange idea. (FX: SUIT SEALED) Goodbye, Mrs Clarke. Run along and die with the rest of the experiment – at the hands of those who love you. Your 'Doctor', quite possibly...

FX: HE STEPS THROUGH AN AUTOMATIC DOOR. IT SHUTS. CONSTANCE IS LEFT ALONE.

SCENE 61: EXT. CITY STREET

FX: STOMPING OF SUITS FROM BEHIND GLASS. SUDDENLY A SMASH! AS THE DOCTOR AND FLIP CRASH THROUGH. AS THEY PROCEED, FORCIBLY MARCHED.

FLIP

Are these suits gonna force us to smash through everything?

DOCTOR

So it would appear. – The main population centre isn't far ahead. I dread to think of the destruction we're capable of wreaking.

FLIP

There must be a way out of this! Mustn't there?

DOCTOR

It's not windows and bus shelters I'm worried about. It's Mrs Clarke.

FLIP

Connie? (REALISATION) The Middleman, he said we'd all have to kill our families..

DOCTOR

For us, that means Mrs Clarke. Who's still in the Middle, I presume, to judge by our direction of travel.

FX: A THIRD SUIT STOMPING ALONG, JUST AHEAD.

FLIP

(POINTING OUT) Yeah, and we're not the only troops headed that way. Look, up there on the flyover – it's Livvy!

DOCTOR

Who's she being forced to target, I wonder...?

FX: CRUMBLING MASONRY ABOVE. CONTINUES THROUGH –

FLIP

She's stomped holes in the flyover. It's breaking up! – Er, how do we make these things stop?

DOCTOR

We don't. We just have to hope the suits can take the weight of the flyover.

FLIP

You mean...?

FX: FLYOVER COLLAPSES ON TOP OF THEM.

DOCTOR & FLIP

(BURIED) Aaaaaaaaaah!

FX: FALLEN MASONRY SETTLES.

SCENE 62: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

CONSTANCE

(TRYING TO WAKE HIM) Mr York? Mr York? Callum, can you hear me?

YORK

(GROGGY) Mrs Clarke...? The Middleman, he –

CONSTANCE

... shot you with a tranquillising ray of some description.

YORK

Right. So where is he now?

CONSTANCE

He strapped on an armoured suit, and went to see his paymasters. But he's the least of our problems now.

YORK

Why...?

FX: SIDE WALL OF NEXT ROOM SMASHED IN. A SUIT STOMPING THROUGH.

CONSTANCE

That's why. The Middleman has abandoned this 'experiment'.

YORK

'Experiment'?

CONSTANCE

The army are here!! Head down, Mr York...!

FX: SUIT SMASHES THROUGH GLASS PARTITION. STOMPS TO STOP.

OLIVIA

DAD!

YORK

Olivia...? What are you doing here?

OLIVIA

Dad – get out! Get away from me!!

YORK

But –

FX: OLIVIA'S ARMATURE LOCKS AND LOADS.

CONSTANCE

You don't understand, Callum! The Middleman's reprogrammed the suits –

OLIVIA

... and mine is targeting you!

YORK

What?!

SCENE 63: INT. SUBURBAN HALLWAY

FX: DISTANT STOMPING, ARMATURE FIRE, SIRENS.

CHLOE

What are those noises...? – Computer: update, please.

COMPUTER

No data available. Middle advises: stay in your home.

CHLOE

Well, something's going on. All that smoke in the air, and those sirens!

FX: OUTSIDE – JANAIYA STOMPS THROUGH GARDEN GATE, LITERALLY, AND TOWARDS DOOR THROUGH..

CHLOE

What the...? – That was right outside the house!

COMPUTER

Repeat. Middle advises: stay in your home.

CHLOE

They're coming here...!

FX: OUTSIDE – STOMPING PAUSES; HYDRAULIC WHIRR. THEN – FRONT DOOR SMASHED ONTO FLOOR. BABY BEGINS TO CRY UPSTAIRS.

CHLOE

(SHRIEKS)

JANAIYA

(FX: STOMPING IN) Get away from me, Chloe!

CHLOE

Mum?! What are you – what are you doing here...?

JANAIYA

Please, you have to get away!

FX: WEAPONS RAISE, LOCK ONTO CHLOE.

CHLOE

Mum?? Sophie's upstairs – you can't –

JANAIYA

I can't control the suit, Chloe. You have to get away! Take Sophie and get away from me, before...

FX: HER WEAPON OPENS FIRE.

SCENE 64: **INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE**

FX: OLIVIA IS STILL ADVANCING ON CALLUM AND CONSTANCE.

OLIVIA

(CONCENTRATION EFFORT THROUGHOUT) It wants me to fire, but I don't want to shoot! Tell me how not to make the armature shoot!

CONSTANCE

Callum. Callum!! – You helped design the drone machines. What do you know about these suits?

YORK

I – I remember seeing a report, about a glitch in the software..

CONSTANCE

And?!

YORK

And there's a way – I think – to overload the system..

FX: GRINDING HYDRAULICS.

OLIVIA

Dad, please! It wants me to raise my arm! I can't stop it!!

CONSTANCE

(TO YORK) What can she do, Callum?!

YORK

The suit draws psychokinetic power from the wearer's memories – from their experiences. But there's only so much energy it can take in one go.

OLIVIA

So I can overload the system how, exactly?

YORK

By focusing on your memories. Summon up the most powerful memories you have, and it should cause the system to shut down.

CONSTANCE

Why would that even work?

YORK

We discovered that... when the troopers died, they burned out the system. It's true what they say: that your whole life flashes in front of your eyes, just before the end.

OLIVIA

But I can't think of anything!!

CONSTANCE

Olivia, you have to try!

SCENE 65: **INT. SUBURBAN HALLWAY**

FX: ARMATURE WINDS DOWN. BABY STILL CRYING UPSTAIRS.

CHLOE

Mum? Mum, you nearly killed me –

JANAIYA

(CONCENTRATION EFFORT) Chloe, please! It took everything I had to direct my arm away. I don't want to shoot! I'd do anything not to make it shoot! But I can't stop it!

CHLOE

I – I have to fetch Sophie...

JANAIYA

Then run, Chloe! Run!!

FX: AS CHLOE RUSHES UPSTAIRS...

JANAIYA

Roman – I wish you were here, you'd know what to do... stupid suit – stop... stop moving... I refuse this. I refuse I refuse I refuse!

SCENE 66: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

CONSTANCE

Olivia – you have to concentrate!

YORK

Please, Olivia...!

OLIVIA

Alright, Dad, alright! – I remember... I remember the day they came and took you away. It was your birthday and Mum and me had made a little cake. And you looked at me and you seemed so sad, but you it was like you'd always known. I hugged you so hard, and then...

CONSTANCE

Then what?

YORK

Olivia, you have to remember!

OLIVIA

Then the robots came to take you away – the ones they had before the drones – and then... then me and Mum, we just sat there on the floor, and ate the cake. Mum wasn't well even then, I knew. But it was the last time the three of us were all together.

FX: SUDDENLY – A POWERING DOWN SOUND. THE SUIT IS IDLING.

OLIVIA

Wait... did that work?

YORK

You did it! You've burned out the automatic guidance!

FX: OLIVIA FLEXES HER LEGS AND ARMS.

OLIVIA

It's back under my control. (RELIEF) Oh, Dad...!

CONSTANCE

Yes, the family reunion can wait. The Middleman sent the entire army of the End to do the exact same thing to their families as you were about to do to him.

YORK

What?

OLIVIA

Your friend's right. Dad, you need to tell each and every trooper how to overload their suits.

YORK

Me?!

CONSTANCE

This is the Middleman's suite, is it not? This is his, er, 'workstation'?

YORK

(REALISATON) Yes, yes of course...!

CONSTANCE

Then you can send out a message on the Middleman's frequency!

FX: YORK ACTIVATES KEYBOARD.

YORK

This is the Middle, with a message to all soldiers of the End..

SCENE 67: **INT. SUBURBAN HALLWAY**

FX: DOOR SLAMS UPSTAIRS. CHLOE COMES HURRYING HALFWAY DOWN, CARRYING CRYING BABY. STOPS. JANAIYA'S HYDRAULICS SWIVEL.

CHLOE

Mum, let me pass. I'm taking Sophie and I'm leaving. Sophie, your grand-daughter. Mum, let me pass!

JANAIYA

It won't let me let you go, Chloe. The suit. I can't – can't stop it.

FX: WEAPON POWERING UP.

JANAIYA

I'm sorry...!

CHLOE

Mum, don't!

FX: CRACKLE. YORK IS HEARD OVER JANAIYA'S COMM CHANNEL.

YORK

(D; FIRST SENTENCE FROM PREVIOUS SCENE) *This is the Middle, with a message to all soldiers of the End...*

SCENE 68: **EXT. CITY STREET**

FX: HUGE PILE OF RUBBLE SHOVED ASIDE BY SUIT HYDRAULICS.

FLIP

There! Takes more than a falling flyover to flatten a Flip!

DOCTOR

In these suits, certainly. Which is interesting.

FLIP

Why's that then-? (FX: SUDDEN WHIRRING AS SUITS DRAG THEM AWAY)
Whoa! We're off again.

FX: THEY STOMP OVER WRECKAGE, RESUMING PREVIOUS COURSE.

DOCTOR

We're all but invulnerable in these suits. But we saw soldiers of the End being killed by Kronvos energy weapons.

FLIP

So...?

DOCTOR

So, either the Kronvos holograms emitted energy beams purposely designed to penetrate these suits, or the suits were purposely designed with that particular vulnerability built in..

FLIP

Right! And you want to find out what that is so people can shoot us dead, too? Doctor, we're not the monsters!

DOCTOR

In these suits, we are! There must be some way to stop us..

FX: CRACKLE. YORK IS HEARD OVER JANAIYA'S COMM CHANNEL.

YORK

(D; FIRST SENTENCE FROM PREVIOUS SCENE) This is the Middle, with a message to all soldiers of the End..

CROSS TO:

SCENE 69: **INT. SUBURBAN HALLWAY**

FX: YORK'S SPEECH CONTINUES.

YORK

(D) We think there's a way to shut down the suits' automatic targeting, by overwhelming their systems with psychokinetic energy.

CHLOE

Psycho-what?

JANAIYA

Ssh!

SCENE 70: **EXT. CITY STREET**

YORK

(D) Please, just trust me on this! Imagine your whole life flashing before your eyes. Pick out your strongest memories – good ones, bad ones, doesn't matter.

FLIP

What's the point of that?

DOCTOR

No, no, it might work!

YORK

(D) Then hold that thought. Shut out everything else! Please, it's the only way!

FX: CRACKLE – COMMS OFF.

FLIP

Come off it!

DOCTOR

Psychokinetic energy is a tangible force. It's got to be worth a try! – Think of something in your past.

FLIP

I can't!

DOCTOR

Anything!

FLIP

I can't!

SCENE 71: **INT. SUBURBAN HALLWAY**

JANAIYA

I remember... the day you were born, Chloe. Roman and I transmatted to the hospital – we were in such a rush, he said not to worry about the side effects on the bump. He was so worried, so scared, and then when you arrived, it all just fell away. Roman just couldn't stop smiling – he was smiling at you and he was smiling at me.

CHLOE

Oh, Mum...

SCENE 72: EXT. CITY STREET

FLIP

Really I can't!

DOCTOR

There must be something, Flip! Like the man said: imagine your whole life, flashing before your eyes...

FLIP

Oh well, I get that loads. I got that when I was getting married.

DOCTOR

Your wedding day! Perfect!

FLIP

Only then I was thinking about that time I jumped out of Earth orbit. 'Taking the plunge', you know?

DOCTOR

Well, think about that then!

FLIP

Except the time I jumped out of Earth orbit, I was thinking about that time in Scotland, with the Wirrn, when I crashed that stupid microlite on the ice.

DOCTOR

So concentrate on that!

FLIP

Only then, I was thinking about that time I got shot and killed by the Porcian leader – uh, Krarm! Krarn? No, Krarm. He was funny.

DOCTOR

(FRUSTRATION) Fli-i-p!

FLIP

Only when that happened – Oh! Yeah! (LAUGHS) I was thinking about that forest in Belgium. After Waterloo. The Forritt-des-Swines –

DOCTOR

Forêt de Soignes –

FLIP

That's the one. I'd left Jared in the Dalek pursuit ship, and gone off with you to see your TARDIS for the first time. And on the way, when I asked you what your TARDIS time machine looked like, you were being all cryptic and (SING-SONG) 'I know something you don't,' like you were laughing to yourself –

DOCTOR

I was not!

FLIP

Whose memory is this – mine or yours? Yeah: *smirking* to yourself 'cos you knew I was thinking it was gonna be like some shiny *Star Wars* spaceship doodah, when all it was was a blue box, and you couldn't wait for me see it then walk in and go 'O.M.G., it's bigger on the inside than the out. O.M.G., O.M.G.,' like a right idiot.

FX: FLIP'S SUIT POWERS DOWN. SHE DOESN'T NOTICE AND CARRIES ON.

FLIP

So when we *finally* got there, I thought I'd best play it cool, like Jared did the first time we met at the disco in the community centre, cos he didn't want me to think he was an idiot, when he so obviously was – sorry, sorry, going off the point.

FX: DOCTOR'S SUIT POWERS DOWN. FLIP DOESN'T NOTICE THAT EITHER.

FLIP

Aaanyway. That's why, when you finally showed me inside the TARDIS, and it was bigger on the inside than the out – which was pretty amazeballs, I've got to admit – I just went (SARCASTIC) 'Ooooo' in, like, this ironic voice? Even though I was really going 'O.M.G.' inside. And me going 'Ooooo' like that put your nose so far out of joint that you disappeared off to watch cricket for, like, seven light years and – (BREAKS OFF) What are you looking at me like that for?

DOCTOR

I'm not looking at you like anything.

FLIP

Smirking! – This suit's shut down, hasn't it?

DOCTOR

Indeed it has. Well done, Flip.

FLIP

It shut down ages ago, didn't it? And you just let me carry on, like a proper nana!

DOCTOR

Forgive me. I was trying to focus on my own thoughts.

FLIP

I bet you were. What was it then, your memory?

DOCTOR

Ah, that's for me to know.

FLIP

Oh, go on – was it something back from, what's it called – Gallifrey?

DOCTOR

Like I said. For me to know.

SCENE 73: **INT. SUBURBAN HALLWAY**

FX: JANAIYA'S SUIT POWERS DOWN.

JANAIYA

At last. Oh Chloe – I'm so sorry. I didn't mean any of that to happen...!

CHLOE

Mum, it's so good to see you.

JANAIYA

You too, my dear! You too!

FX: PART OF THE CEILING FALLS IN.

CHLOE

Shame about the house.

SCENE 74: INT. MIDDLE ATRIUM/SURFACE LIFT

FX: THE MIDDLEMAN STOMPS TO A STOP OUTSIDE ONE OF THE GREAT GLASS ATRIUM LIFTS.

MIDDLEMAN

Computer, elevator programme three-seven-four.

COMPUTER

Activated. Destination: the surface.

FX: LIFT DOOR OPENS AND THE MIDDLEMAN STEPS INSIDE. THEY CLOSE BEHIND HIM. MIDDLEMAN OPENS HIS COMM LINK AS THE LIFT STARTS TO MOVE UPWARDS.

MIDDLEMAN

Middleman to Lab Tech. Violet, come in please.

VIOLET

(D) Hello, Middleman – how's your war?

MIDDLEMAN

It's over. Some fool at the End has ruined the whole experiment.

VIOLET

(D) How?

MIDDLEMAN

That can wait. The point is: the army knows everything. I've no choice but to abandon Formicia.

VIOLET

(D) That is... disappointing. A hundred years of investment – for what?

MIDDLEMAN

Well, the data I've gathered may yet prove invaluable...

VIOLET

(D) Let's hope so. Or we shall have to reconsider your future career.

MIDDLEMAN

I'm on my way up to the surface. Will you meet me?

VIOLET

I look forward to it.

FX: LIFT KEEPS ZOOMING UP.

SCENE 75: EXT. CITY STREET

DOCTOR

It would seem that we are no longer imprisoned inside these suits, so...

FX: HYDRAULIC PFF AS HE OPENS UP THE HATCH ON HIS CHEST.

FLIP

You're not trying to work out how to get of that, are you?

DOCTOR

Oddly enough – yes.

FLIP

You sure that's wise? All this isn't over yet. We need to find Connie, for starters.

FX: DOCTOR'S COMM LINK BUZZES.

CONSTANCE

(D) Doctor, Mrs Ramon – are you receiving me?

DOCTOR

She appears to have found us. – Mrs Clarke! You're in the Middle, I presume?

CONSTANCE

(D) Indeed. The Middleman's army has ground to a halt, thanks to my friend Mr York, and his daughter.

FLIP

Livvy! Is Livvy there?

CONSTANCE

(D) But as for the Middleman himself – he's in his own suit, and by the looks of things he's accessed a secret executive lift.

FLIP

You mean he's getting away?

CONSTANCE

(D) My suspicion is, he's heading for the surface.

DOCTOR

I thought the surface was off-limits?

CONSTANCE

(D) So did everyone.

FX: JANAIYA STOMPING UP IN B/G THROUGH –

FLIP

Right then. Just as well we're still wearing these suits, isn't it?

DOCTOR

(CAUTION) Flip..

FX: JANAIYA ARRIVES.

JANAIYA

Doctor! There you are.

FLIP

Oh – hey, Janaiya. Me and the Doctor are just going after the Middleman.

DOCTOR

I said no such thing!

JANAIYA

Mind if I join you?

FX: SHE RELOADS HER WEAPON.

SCENE 76: INT. SURFACE LIFT

FX: MIDDLEMAN'S LIFT IS STILL SPEEDING UP INTO THE SKY.

COMPUTER

Two minutes to arrival on surface.

MIDDLEMAN

Thank you, Computer. I'll miss this view. Not a bad sphere, really. There'll be other testing grounds, I know, but I grew to rather like Formicia. Ah well.

COMPUTER

Alert. Detecting damage to exterior lift track.

MIDDLEMAN

Above us?!

FX: NOISE FROM BELOW — THREE EXO-SUITS BOUNCING UP THE OUTSIDE OF THE TOWER — SMASH, SMASH, SMASH! CONTINUES THROUGH —

COMPUTER

Below.

MIDDLEMAN

What?! (LOOKING DOWN) Three exo-suits leaping up the outside of the tower. Now that is not something I expected to see...

SCENE 77: **EXT. TOWER**

FX: WIND RIPS AROUND THE TOWER AS THE DOCTOR, FLIP AND JANAIYA LEAP UP AFTER THE MIDDLEMAN, ALL IN ARMOURED SUITS.

FLIP

I feel like a big robot squirrel going up a tree.

DOCTOR

I just hope our magnetic clamps hold out.

JANAIYA

Up there, Doctor – I can see the Middleman's great glass elevator, right up by the cavern roof!

FLIP

Yeah, well, he's not getting away from us now...! (EFFORT AS THEY...)

FX: CONTINUE CLIMBING.

SCENE 78: EXT. SURFACE

FX: PASTORAL AMBIENCE – BIRDS ETC. THE MIDDLEMAN'S LIFT EMERGES FROM THE GROUND AND COMES TO A FINAL STOP. GLASS DOOR SLIDING OPEN. MIDDLEMAN EMERGES, STILL IN HIS EXO-SUIT.

MIDDLEMAN

Oh, it's good to be back on the surface, after so long. Now - where's that transport I was promised...?

COMPUTER

(FROM LIFT) Warning. Unauthorised incursion onto surface.

MIDDLEMAN

I'm entitled to be here, you know!

FX: THREE SUITS SMASH THROUGH THE BASE OF THE GLASS ELEVATOR.

MIDDLEMAN

Oh, you mean them!

FX: DOCTOR, FLIP AND JANAIYA LEAP OUT OF ELEVATOR – THEIR BOOTS STRIKING THE GROUND IN SEQUENCE.

DOCTOR

The surface, at last!

FLIP

Nice here, innit?

JANAIYA

Another lie. They told us the surface was ruined, devastated by war.

MIDDLEMAN

Don't be so dense. There was no war – no Kronvos has ever existed. It's always been perfectly fine up here. You lot just needed to think you'd lost a generation, for... motivational reasons.

DOCTOR

So what happened to them? The 'lost generation'?

MIDDLEMAN

Oh, they were given a sphere of their own, as an experiment. They're still around here somewhere, I believe, the great-great-grandparents. All body hair and sharpened teeth.

JANAIYA

That's monstrous!

MIDDLEMAN

Nothing to do with me – I'm relatively new to the job, just following on, really. Any objections, you'll have to take them up with my employers.

DOCTOR

You know, I think I'd rather like to meet your employers.

MIDDLEMAN

You may get your wish – they'll be picking me up at any moment.

DOCTOR

Are they now?

MIDDLEMAN

I'd go back to Formicia if I were you. You do realise they'll kill you?

JANAIYA

You do realise I'm going to kill you first?!

FX: STEPS FORWARD TOWARDS THE MIDDLEMAN.

MIDDLEMAN

I have... no idea who you are. Who are you, dear?

JANAIYA

My name is Janaiya and I was one of your soldiers. My husband Roman was one of your soldiers too. He died for your cause.

MIDDLEMAN

And did he believe in it?

JANAIYA

Y-yes, but –

MIDDLEMAN

Well then, I'm sure he died happy.

FLIP

You what?

MIDDLEMAN

You may not want to hear it, but all we ever wanted was to give you a reason to live. And to die. Look – am I to take it you want to fight me? Because I feel I should I warn you, my suit's an executive upgrade...

JANAIYA

(LEAPS ON HIM) Animal!!!

FX: THEY BEGIN TO FIGHT. BIG HYDRAULIC PUNCHES.

SCENE 79: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

FX: AN ALARM SOUNDS.

COMPUTER

Alert. Structural damage to Middle Tower. Integrity compromised.

CONSTANCE

What?

FX: CHITTERING DATA STREAM.

OLIVIA

Dad – these readings...!

YORK

Cracks spreading down through the superstructure, from two miles up.

OLIVIA

How?

CONSTANCE

The Doctor and Flip and their metal-suited friend must have damaged the outside of the Tower in their ascent. Now that damage is cascading down. – We'd better warn him.

YORK

Never mind the Doctor, we need to evacuate the Tower!

FX: CONSTANCE ACTIVATES COMM.

CONSTANCE

Doctor. Doctor! Come in, please –

FX: OFF, OVER COMM, MIDDLEMAN AND JANAIYA FIGHTING IN B/G.

DOCTOR

(D) Ah! Mrs Clarke. I was just about to call you. Am I right in thinking you now have access to the systems of the Middle?

CONSTANCE

Not for much longer. The Tower is in danger of collapse.

DOCTOR

(D) What I need you to do won't take long. Please, listen to me carefully...

SCENE 80: **EXT. SURFACE**

FX: MIDDLEMAN AND JANAIYA CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

JANAIYA

If my husband were here, he'd have wiped the floor with you, Middleman! (EFFORT...)

FX: BIG HYDRAULIC HIT ON MIDDLEMAN.

MIDDLEMAN

Urgh! – All I wanted was to make a better way of life for everyone...!

JANAIYA

I wish you'd shut up. (EFFORT)

FX: ANOTHER HIT. AUDIBLE DAMAGE TO SUIT.

MIDDLEMAN

Aaahhhh!

FLIP

(CALLING) Doctor, she's ripping his suit apart!

JANAIYA

That's the idea!

FX: DOCTOR STOMPS OVER.

DOCTOR

Janaiya, please – stop!! You've done enough. He's beaten.

JANAIYA

This is for Roman! For my husband!

DOCTOR

Killing him won't help me make things better. So please, stop. For Roman! For your husband!

BEAT.

FX: JANAIYA'S HYDRAULICS RELAX. MEANWHILE – A FLYING CRAFT IS DESCENDING, SLIGHTLY OFF.

JANAIYA

Very well, Doctor. No more killing.

DOCTOR

Thank you, Janaiya.

FLIP

Err, you lot? There's a plane or something? Coming in to land?

DOCTOR

The Middleman's employers, I presume...

FX: THE MIDDLEMAN IS PRETTY BROKEN. SPARKING SUIT.

MIDDLEMAN

We're all just ants, you see. Tiny little worker ants in a huge, well-organised farm. But here – here comes the Queen...!

FX: PLANE RETROS FIRE.

SCENE 81: INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE

FX: AN ALARM SOUNDS.

COMPUTER

(OVER P.A.) Warning. Tower structure close to collapse. All persons evacuate. Repeat. [Warning. Tower structure close to collapse. All persons evacuate. Repeat.] [CONTINUES THROUGHOUT:]

CONSTANCE

Well, Mr York? Can you do as the Doctor asked?

YORK

You heard the computer! There isn't time! We need to get out of here, all of us!

OLIVIA

Dad, we have to try. We owe the Doctor that much!

YORK

I can't lose you, Olivia – not now I've found you again!

OLIVIA

Well, I could exactly say the same!

CONSTANCE

I realise this is a moment of high emotion, but can the pair of you please agree on a course of action?

YORK

Please, Mrs Clarke – take my daughter and go! I can operate the technology from here.

OLIVIA

Yes, but you'll need to break the Middleman's firewall first. And I bet I can hack it faster than you!

YORK

I... (DEFEATED) Yes, perhaps.

CONSTANCE

Well, then – get a move on!

FX: THEY START PRESSING BUTTONS.

SCENE 82: **EXT. SURFACE**

FX: DOOR OF LANDED SHIP WHIRRS OPEN AND A YOUNG WOMAN STEPS LIGHTLY DOWN RAMP, FLANKED BY TWO HEAVY-BOOTED GUARDS.

FLIP

Wow – what is she? Like, a teenager?

DOCTOR

Apparently so.

JANAIYA

And she's in charge?

VIOLET

Good afternoon, Middleman. I see you've brought some friends. Friends who will stand down immediately.

JANAIYA

We're not scared of your guards.

DOCTOR

You should be. Those look like the weapons the Kronvos had.

FLIP

You mean our suits are no protection?

DOCTOR

Exactly.

VIOLET

Well observed, old man. Who are you?

MIDDLEMAN

Violet, this is the oaf who destroyed Formicia–

VIOLET

Yes, thank you, Middleman. I'd concluded as much.

MIDDLEMAN

Ma'am.

VIOLET

(TO DOCTOR) Again: who are you?

DOCTOR

I'm not much at all. You can call me the Doctor.

VIOLET

And what gives you the right, 'Doctor', to interfere in my business?

DOCTOR

Oh! A business, is it?

VIOLET

I've been managing these spheres for over thirty years.

FLIP

Come again? You don't look old enough to take driving lessons!

VIOLET

Success brings with it the rewards of advanced physical renewal. Just ask the Middleman.

JANAIYA

What? So how old is he really?

MIDDLEMAN

That's classified information.

VIOLET

He's seventy-five. Why hide it now? Nothing about your life matters now.

JANAIYA

Seventy-five...?

FLIP

Rumbled!

JANAIYA

Seventy-five!! You should have been fighting alongside us... showing your courage?

MIDDLEMAN

Sheep need shepherds. That's the company motto.

JANAIYA

I wish I had killed you now.

FLIP

I don't understand. How's all this a business, anyhow?

VIOLET

Formicia is one of forty research spheres buried in the crust of this planet. Forty new model worlds! We live in an expanding universe, with an expanding population. But sooner or later every civilisation comes to the same crunch: more and more people, sharing ever-fewer resources...

DOCTOR

Food, money, energy – that sort of thing?

VIOLET

Exactly. Shortages that can bring about total societal collapse, if one doesn't manage one's affairs with care. And if one can't... well, that's where we come in.

DOCTOR

You're... management consultants!?!

VIOLET

Of a sort. Create the right conditions, and you can remake society any way you want. Democratic, autocratic, oligarchic, gerontocratic. The possibilities are endless.

MIDDLEMAN

In the case of Formicia, the experiment was to see if we could create a totally expendable, but totally willing warrior class.

VIOLET

The holy grail! We've been trying to crack that one for centuries.

DOCTOR

Well – in the case of Formicia, I'm afraid all you've done is create a fighting force strong enough to resist you.

VIOLET

(LAUGHS) As if! I'll tell you what's going to happen, shall I? First I'm going to kill you. Then I'm going to kill your friends. Then I'm going to kill this useless Middleman.

MIDDLEMAN

What?

VIOLET

Just business. – And finally: I'm going to burn out the whole of Formicia with chemical weapons. Dissolving it, leaving the whole test sphere empty for a new population to be brought in.

FLIP

But you can't!!

VIOLET

I can, you know. I've done it before.

DOCTOR

(LOUDLY) And what about the Kronvos?

VIOLET

The Kronvos?

CROSS DIRECTLY TO:

SCENE 83: **INT. MIDDLEMAN'S SUITE [CONTINUOUS]**

FX: DOCTOR OVER COMMS.

DOCTOR

(D) Yes, (EVEN MORE EMPHATIC) what about the Kronvos?

OLIVIA

That's our cue.

CONSTANCE

Now, Mr York!

FX: KEYBOARD-BASHING FLOURISH.

YORK

Done!

SCENE 84: **EXT. SURFACE**

FX: MASS ZAPS — REVERSING SOUND OF KRONVOS DEMATERIALISATION IN SCENE 19. THOUSANDS OF KRONVOS MATERIALISE ON THE SCENE.

MIDDLEMAN

(TO VIOLET) The Kronvos! He's got control of the entire Kronvos army!

DOCTOR

Thanks to my friends in the Middle.

FX: MASS KRONVOS SLOBBERING, HEAVY BREATHING.

VIOLET

The Kronvos are solid-state holograms. They're not real.

FLIP

The beams their guns shoot are.

JANAIYA

We know that only too well.

DOCTOR

(HOLLERING) Kronvos army — present arms!

FX: EVERY KRONVOS SOLDIER RATTLES WEAPONRY.

KRONVOS ARMY [WILDTRACK]

KRONVOS!!!

DOCTOR

You appear to be outnumbered, Violet. Two thousand and three to, er, four. Now I've known some long odds in my time — but if I were you: I think I'd surrender.

MIDDLEMAN

Violet? I think we should do as he says.

VIOLET

I blame you for this, Middleman.

DOCTOR

Splendid.

FLIP

Wait — we've won?

DOCTOR

It would seem so. Now — since we can't return the way we came, I suggest we blast a hole in the cavern roof and fly Violet's private jet back to Formicia. It looks rather luxurious.

FLIP

Doctor, we can't just leave! What about the Middleman, and Facelift Woman? And the End, and the Kronvos?

DOCTOR

Well, that's up to Janaiya.

JANAIYA

Me?

DOCTOR

I suggest you consult with the management here, and make them an offer they can't refuse. The immediate liberation of all thirty-nine other colony spheres on this planet would seem to be an excellent starting-point.

VIOLET

(LAUGHS) In exchange for me and this Middleman?

MIDDLEMAN

The Board will never accept that.

JANAIYA

In which case: we'll just have to liberate the other thirty-nine spheres by force.

MIDDLEMAN

What?

JANAIYA

You made us, Middleman. Two armies: the army of the End, and the army of the Kronvos. You made us. You trained us. You armed us. And now we're ready to fight – for freedom! (CALLING) Isn't that right, Kronvos?

KRONVOS ARMY [WILDTRACK]

KRONVOS!! KRONVOS!! KRONVOS!!

SCENE 85: EXT. ROOFTOP [LATER]

FX: FADE UP. BELOW — A CARNIVAL IN PROGRESS, AS IT WAS WHEN THE TARDIS LANDED. THE DOCTOR, FLIP AND CONSTANCE WALK INTO THE SCENE.

FLIP

We're not leaving already? Just as the party's getting started?

CONSTANCE

I've had my fill of this place, Philippa. Haven't you?

FLIP

But it's your birthday, remember?

CONSTANCE

That was yesterday, remember? What a pity, I seem to have missed it.

FLIP

Yeah, I'll get you next year. You see that I don't.

FX: THEY WALK TO STOP.

DOCTOR

The TARDIS, at last. Good to see you again, old girl.

FX: AS HE OPENS TARDIS DOOR —

CONSTANCE

They won't really have to go to war, will they? The people of Formicia?

DOCTOR

I doubt it. Our friend Violet's in the social engineering business. A revolution in their own R and D lab isn't exactly the best advertisement. If they've any sense, they'll cut their losses and leave.

FLIP

So they're gonna get away with it? Violet, and the Middleman?

DOCTOR

Perhaps. But if it means that Janaiya, and Callum and Olivia York, and every other inhabitant of this poor benighted planet at last get to live their lives in the manner of their own choosing...

FLIP

Suppose.

FX: HUGE SOUND OF THE MIDDLE TOWER COLLAPSING IN THE DISTANCE.

CONSTANCE

Doctor, Flip, look – the Middle – it’s finally falling!

DOCTOR

Good. This world needs to start again from the ground up. Like they say: “The End is the Beginning.” – Come along, Mrs Ramon, Mrs Clarke.

FX: THEY ENTER TARDIS. DOOR CLOSED. BEAT. TARDIS
DEMATERIALISES.

THE END